PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL

Date: 11 October 2024
Time: 03:00 PM Sri Lanka Time

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Harini Amarasuriya a popular choice for Prime Minister

President AK Dissanayake, Prime Minister Harini Amarasuriya and Ali Sabry the least unpopular politicians SLOTS tracked during 2024

In IHP SLOTS polling through 2024 prior to the Presidential Election, AK Dissanayake, Harini Amarasuriya, and Ali Sabry were consistently the most popular politicians tracked. After AK Dissanayake, Harini Amarasuriya was the next most popular, suggesting she will be a popular choice for the PM post.

Overall, Sri Lankans still held unfavourable views of all politicians tracked by SLOTS, with most having net favourability ratings below -30%. AK Dissanayake and Harini Amarasuriya had net ratings of -10%, and Ali Sabry and Sajith Premadasa followed with net ratings of -29% and -31% each.
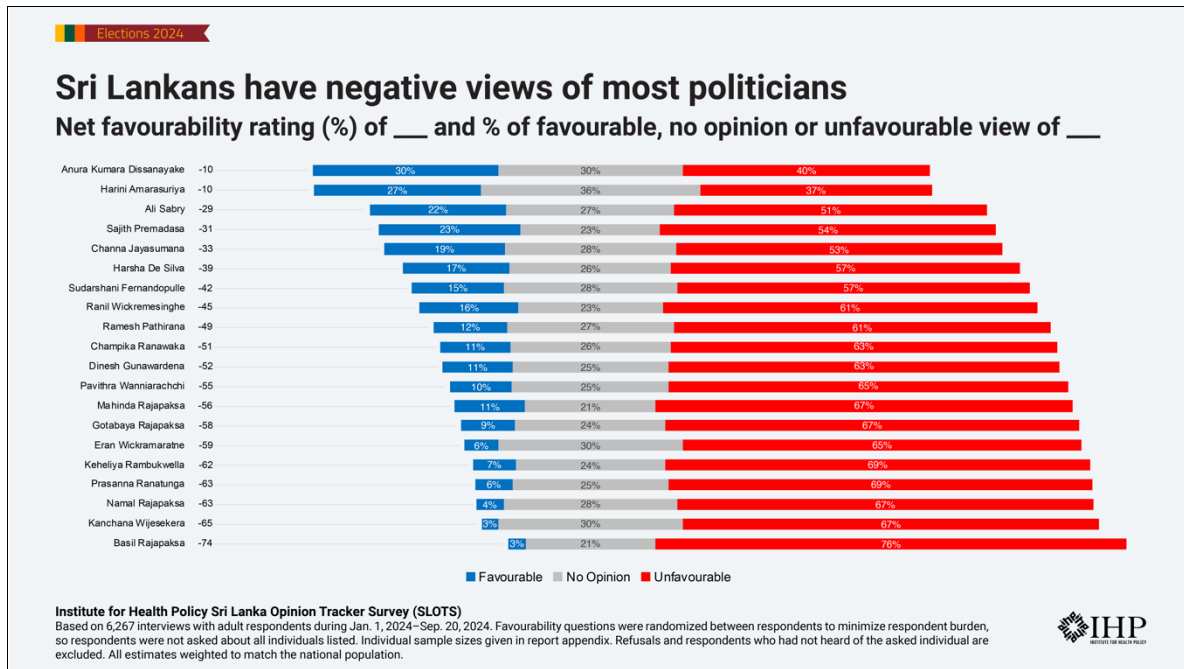
Ali Sabry had the highest favourability rating of all SLPP politicians that SLOTS tracked, suggesting that his retirement from Parliament may be a loss for his party.

Most politicians tracked were deeply unpopular having net favourability ratings less than -50%, with members of the public having unfavourable views typically outnumbering those with favourable views five to one. In general, professionals such as Ali Sabry, Harsha de Silva, Dr Sudarshini Fernandopulle, and Professor Jayasumana tended to have higher favourability ratings than other politicians.

The most unpopular politicians tracked during the year were Basil Rajapaksa (-74%), Kanchana Wijesekera (-65%), Namal Rajapaksa (-63%), and Prasanna Ranatunga (-63%).

IHP tracked the favourability of 20 active politicians during the year, consisting of recent Presidents and Prime Ministers, major party leaders, current and recent health ministers and selected other MPs. The list is not intended to be exhaustive, and it's possible that more popular politicians were not tracked. All favourability estimates are

weighted for age, gender, ethnicity, province, income ranking, education and sector to match the national population.

Full report

Institute for Health Policy, October 2024, "Harini Amarasuriya a popular choice for Prime Minister" *Available at :* https://ihp.lk/sites/default/files/press-release/SLOTSReport202414.pdf

Previous reports available from ihp.lk

Institute for Health Policy, March 2023, "Public continue to hold deeply unfavourable views of almost all politicians across all parties", SLOTS Report #2023-07. *Available at* *https://www.ihp.lk/publications/docs/SLOTSReport202307.pdf*

Institute for Health Policy, April 2022, "Economic crisis results in growing public disaffection with politicians, but particularly with President Rajapaksa", SLOTS Report #2022-04. *Available at: https://www.ihp.lk/publications/docs/SLOTSReport202204.pdf*

About IHP

IHP is solely responsible for commissioning and designing the survey, and it takes full responsibility for it. IHP is an independent, non-partisan research institution based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The SLOTS lead investigator is Dr Ravi Rannan-Eliya of IHP, who was trained in public opinion polling at Harvard University, and who has conducted many opinion surveys over three decades, both in and outside Sri Lanka.

Methodology

SLOTS surveys a national sample of adults (ages 18 and over) reached by random digit dialling of mobile numbers, and others coming from a national panel of respondents who were previously recruited through random selection. SLOTS tracks

favourability by asking respondents if they have a favourable, unfavourable or neutral opinion of a public figure or institution: net favourability percentage being the difference of the favourable and unfavourable responses. All estimates are weighted to match the national population with respect to age, sex, sector, ethnicity, religion, education, socioeconomic status, and geographical location.

Funding