

MORAKOT: THE AFTERMATH: Ma, Liu approval ratings plummet in Morakot's wake

Written by Taipei Times

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President Ma Ying-jeou's popularity has dropped to a record low of 16 percent in the wake of Typhoon Morakot, and his odds of winning the 2012 election have fallen to 50 percent, according to opinion polls released yesterday.

A survey conducted by the TVBS Poll Center on Monday and Tuesday found Ma's approval rating had plummeted to 16 percent, while Premier Liu Chao-shiuan's rating plunged to 13 percent.

The poll represented a dive of 25 percentage points from a TVBS poll in June and was down 7 percentage points on Ma's previous low last October.

Sixty-four percent of respondents said they were dissatisfied with the government's performance in relief efforts, while only 21 percent said they were satisfied.

The poll had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.1 percent, TVBS said.

The poll by the Chinese-language United Daily News, a pro-Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) paper, found Ma's popularity had dropped to 29 percent, while Liu had a 20 percent approval rating.

Forty-six percent of respondents said they did not have any confidence in the government's reconstruction efforts, while 38 percent said they did and 15 percent said they did not have an opinion.

A large-scale Cabinet reshuffle was favored by 46 percent of respondents in the newspaper poll, compared to the 18 percent who felt that way in a May survey.

The newspaper poll of 919 adults on Tuesday had a margin of error of plus or minus 3.2 percent.

Ma won 58.45 percent of votes in last year's presidential election and once had an approval rating of 66 percent.

Meanwhile, the Center for Prediction Market at National Chengchi University said the odds of Ma's winning the presidential election had dwindled to 53.6 percent, a drop of 8.1 percentage points from its Aug. 8 forecast. The center began tracking the issue in April, but the trading was not vibrant until late June when Ma's odds of winning the 2012 poll were more than 70 percent, said Lin Jih-wen, the center's executive director.

The center makes predictions on a variety of issues, including politics, the economy, international affairs, sports and entertainment.

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Lin said the likelihood of Ma's winning the 2012 election in a two-way race had dropped since June. Although it has yet to reach the 50 percent mark, the drop after the typhoon was dramatic, Lin said, adding that it would be "dangerous" for Ma if it fell below 50 percent.

□ ADDITIONAL REPORTING BY AFP

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