

Moon ends 2018 with lowest approval rating



In this April 27, 2018, file photo, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, left, poses with President Moon Jae-in for a photo inside the Peace House at the border village of Panmunjom in Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), South Korea. AP-Yonhap

President Moon Jae-in finished off his second year with his lowest approval rating yet. The fall is due to continuing economic hardship, growing concerns over the pace of reconciliation with North Korea and allegations of organized plots by Cheong Wa Dae to illegally monitor private civilians.

The approval rating of the President retreated by 1.2 percentage points to 45.9 percent, last week, according to the poll conducted by Realmeter of 2,011 people across the country. The result was released on Monday.

The polling results followed after a tumultuous year in which the President has

tried hard to encourage a rapid reconciliation with North Korea, paying less attention to economic-related issues that have served to exacerbate divisions in the country.

The local pollster said the steady decline was mostly due to allegations that Cheong Wa Dae was operating special teams to “illegally collect” information on ranking government officials and high-profile executives at private companies. Moon’s office flatly denied the allegations by saying Kim Tae-woo, a former investigator who initially brought the issue to light, used the allegations to cover up his personal wrongdoings.

Moon’s popularity briefly hovered near 80 percent in May this year powered by his landmark summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong-un.



In this April 27, 2018, file photo, North Korean leader Kim Jong-un, left, and President Moon Jae-in cross the border line at the border village of Panmunjom in Demilitarized Zone (DMZ). AP-Yonhap

At that time, the North's leader vowed to dismantle his nuclear program, though the agreement made was vague and more symbolic.

Moon, who acted as a facilitator and negotiator in talks aimed at dismantling the North, persuaded Washington and Pyongyang to have their in-person meeting. While Trump did meet with Kim Jong-un in June this year, no substantial progress over the issue has been made since then.

As the denuclearization talks were stalled, the support rate declined to 53.1 percent in the second week of September hit by the worsening economic data. Moon's popularity bounced back weeks later thanks to his meeting with Kim in Pyongyang but the rating has seen a decline since then.

The poll had a margin of error of 2.2 percentage points and a 95 percent confidence level.

Source: http://www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/nation/2018/12/356_261253.html

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