

PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL

Date: 17 March 2023
Time: 12:01 AM Sri Lanka Time

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT

Dalreen Barthelot
Email: dalreen 'at' ihp.lk

TO CONTACT LEAD INVESTIGATOR

Dr. Ravi Rannan-Eliya
Email: ravi 'at' ihp.lk Twitter: @ravirannaneliya

Voters consolidate around the NPP/JVP, SJB and ITAK, with NPP/JVP taking a clear lead

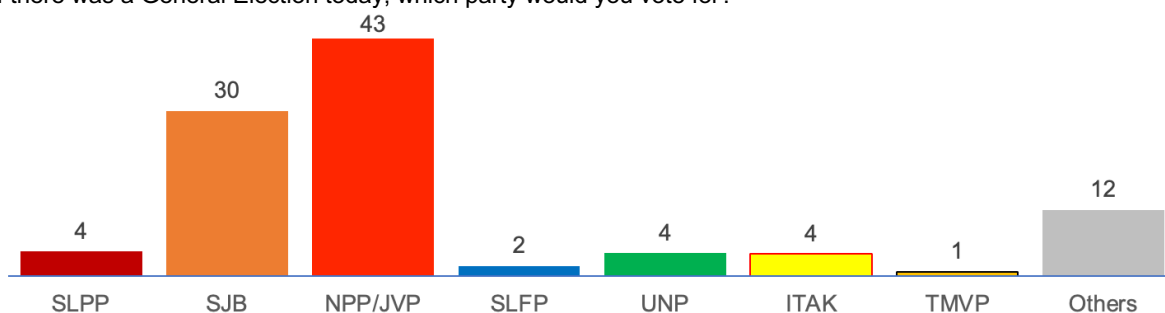
IHP MRP Voting Intentions Estimates February 2023.

The latest Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey (SLOTS) polling in February 2023 shows that nationally voters are consolidating around the NPP/JVP and SJB, and around ITAK and SJB in the Northern Province, with support for the SLPP, SLFP and UNP falling.

Overall, NPP/JVP support surged in February giving it a clear lead with 43% of likely General Election voters, compared with 30% for the SJB. The SLPP, UNP and ITAK were far behind with support of 4% of likely voters each, and SLFP support remained at 2%.

General Election voting intention, February 2023 (% likely voters)

If there was a General Election today, which party would you vote for?



Institute for Health Policy Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey MRP

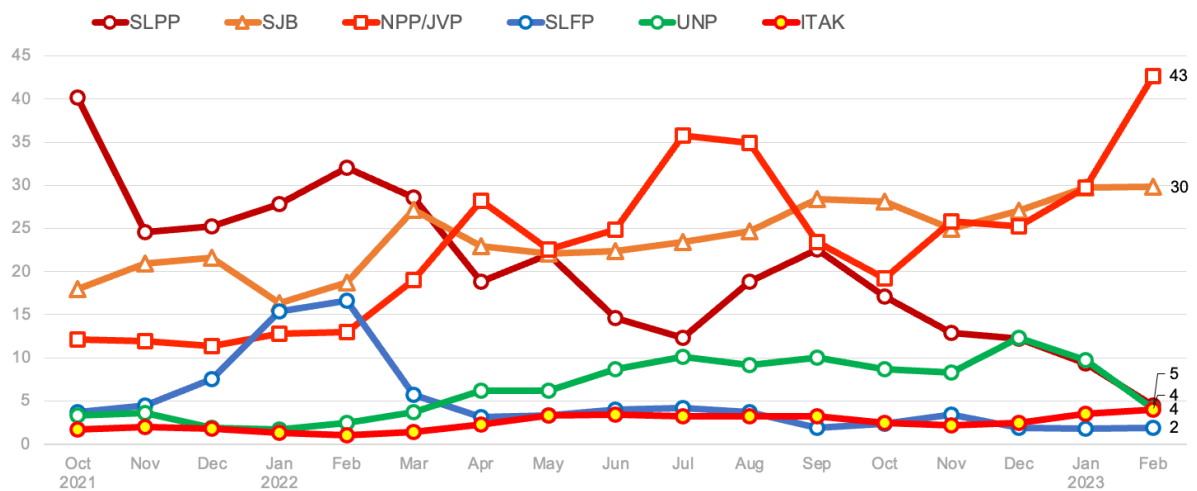
Estimates based on 421 interviews conducted in Feb. 2023, and 10,050 interviews conducted overall from 31 Aug. 2021–12 Mar. 2023. Estimates are derived from a MRP model and are associated with a margin of error assessed as 2–5%.

The NPP/JVP lead in February would have been larger if not for a gap in voter enthusiasm with its supporters saying they are less likely to vote. IHP estimates this reduced its lead over the SJB from 15 points amongst all adults (44% vs. 29%) to 13% amongst likely voters.

The surge in favour of the NPP/JVP follows three months in which it ran neck-and-neck with the SJB. In contrast, support for the SJB did not increase in February. IHP's latest analysis, which uses MRP, indicates that in the 12 months since February 2022 when SLPP support last peaked, the NPP/JVP has gained 30 points and the SJB 11 points. Meanwhile, the SLPP, and SLFP have lost 28 and 15 points respectively, and the UNP has seen its support fluctuate but end only two points higher.

IHP SLOTS General Election voting intention tracker (% likely voters)

If there was a General Election today, which party would you vote for?



Institute for Health Policy Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey MRP

Monthly estimates based on 10,050 interviews conducted from 31 Aug. 2021–12 Mar. 2023. Estimates are derived using a MRP model and are associated with a margin of error assessed as 1–6%, depending on the month and party.

The NPP/JVP and the SJB split the leads at provincial level, with ITAK leading in the Northern Province. During the last four months, the NPP/JVP has led in the Western, Southern, North-Central and North-Western provinces, whilst the SJB has led in Central, Eastern, Uva and Sabaragamuwa provinces.

Dr Rannan-Eliya, SLOTS lead investigator and IHP Executive Director, pointed out that on these trends, the SLPP, SLFP and UNP would fail to win seats in many districts if a General Election was held today, as they would win insufficient votes to meet the thresholds. He added that the latest polling indicates that the electorate appears to be moving on from the confusion that followed the collapse of the President Gotabaya Rajapaksa administration, when voters switched repeatedly between parties, with no set of parties dominating.

Full report available from ihp.lk

Institute for Health Policy, February 2023, "IHP MRP Voting Intentions Update February 2023: Voters consolidate around the NPP/JVP, SJB and ITAK, with NPP/JVP taking a clear lead", SLOTS Report #2023-06. Available at

<http://ihp.lk/publications/docs/SLOTSReport202306.pdf>.

About IHP

IHP is an independent, non-partisan research centre based in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The SLOTS lead investigator is Dr Ravi Rannan-Eliya of IHP, who has trained in public opinion polling at Harvard University and has conducted numerous surveys over three decades.

Methodology

SLOTS combines interviews from 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. IHP estimates voting intent using an adaptation of Multilevel Regression and Post-Stratification (MRP), which exploits data from all SLOTS interviews to estimate voting in a particular month.

The February 2023 MRP estimates are based on 421 interviews conducted in February 2023, and 10,050 interviews conducted overall from 31 August 2021–12 March 2023, with a margin of error assessed as 2–5% for the leading parties.

MRP is a method that is increasingly used by polling firms in other countries to leverage small samples, most notably by YouGov which used it to forecast results of the UK Brexit Referendum and recent UK general elections. All estimates are adjusted to ensure the sample matches the national population with respect to age, sex, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, education, geographical location, and voting in the 2019 Presidential and 2020 General Elections.

Funding

The SLOTS has been funded by the Neelan Tiruchelvam Trust, the UK National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), The Asia Foundation in Sri Lanka, and others, but the sponsors play no role in the study design, analysis, or interpretation of findings. Interested parties can contact IHP for more detailed data and results.