

PRESS RELEASE

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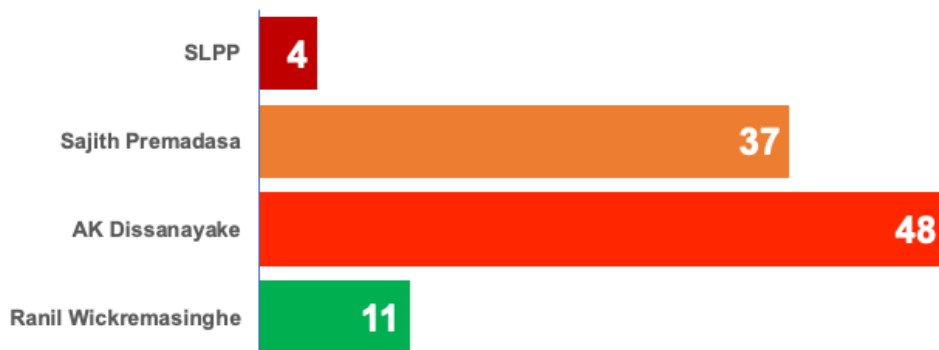
AK Dissanayake (48%) leads Sajith Premadasa (37%) in a potential Presidential Election

IHP Presidential Election Voting Intentions Update March 2023.

In the first release of results from IHP's Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey (SLOTS) MRP tracking of Presidential Election voting intent, AK Dissanayake, NPP/JVP leader, leads with 48% of likely voters in March 2023, ahead of Sajith Premadasa, SJB leader on 37%. Both run far ahead of President Ranil Wickremasinghe on 11% and a generic SLPP candidate on 4%. Estimates are associated with a margin of error of 1–5%.

Presidential Election Voting Intention, March 2023 (% likely voters)

If there was a Presidential Election today, who would you vote for?



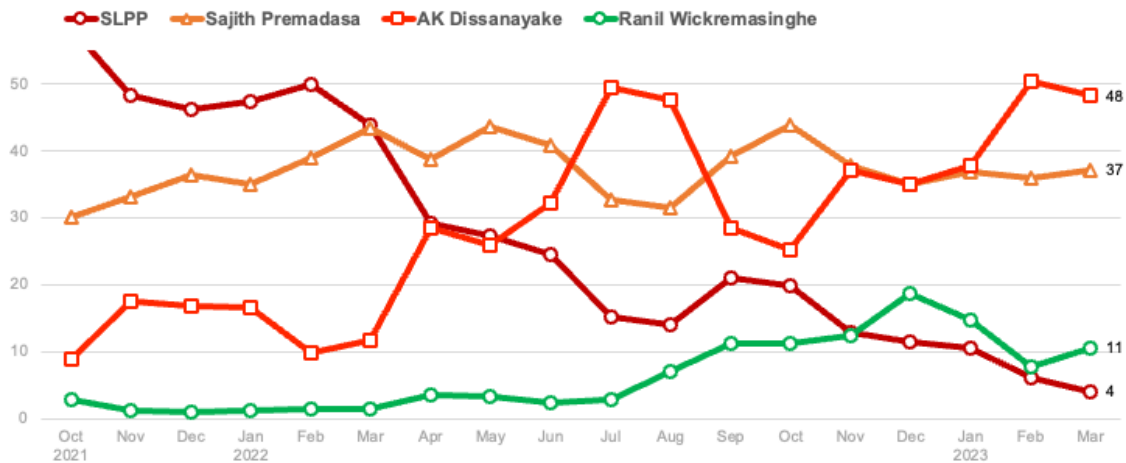
Institute for Health Policy Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey MRP

Estimates based on 521 interviews conducted in Mar. 2023, and 10,601 interviews conducted overall from 31 Aug. 2021–9 Apr. 2023. Estimates are derived from a MRP model and are associated with a margin of error assessed as 1–5%. SLPP referred originally to "President Gotabaya Rajapaksa", but respondents are now asked about a generic SLPP candidate.

Based on reported voter preferences, it is likely that AK Dissanayake would have won a Presidential Election held in March. Although his support was below the required 50% to win a Presidential Election, it is likely he would have won enough second preferences from Ranil Wickremasinghe and SLPP voters to put him over the top.

IHP SLOTS Presidential Election Voting Intention Tracker (% likely voters)

If there was a Presidential Election today, who would you vote for?



Institute for Health Policy Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey MRP

Monthly estimates based on 10,601 interviews conducted from 31 Aug. 2021–9 Apr. 2023. Estimates are derived using a MRP model and are associated with a margin of error assessed as 1–7%, depending on the month and candidate. SLPP referred originally to “President Gotabaya Rajapaksa”, but respondents are now asked about a generic SLPP candidate.

Support for Ranil Wickremasinghe in a potential Presidential Election was boosted after he became President in mid-2022, but his honeymoon with the voters dissipated by early 2023. However, the latest polling in March, in which he gained 3%, suggests a possible increase in voters support for a potential Wickremasinghe candidacy, although he continues to run well behind the two main leaders.

The SLOTS poll only offers respondents a choice of four candidates. Dr Rannan-Eliya, SLOTS lead investigator and IHP Executive Director, commented that “It’s entirely possible that the entry of new candidates or some of the parties forming an alliance would lead to different results.” He added that “Whilst an SJB-UNP tie-up might gain more votes than a SLPP-UNP tie-up, it is also possible that this would lose more voters to the NPP/JVP as many SJB voters are closer to the NPP/JVP in their views than they are to SLPP and UNP voters.”

Full report

Institute for Health Policy, April 2023, “IHP Presidential Election Voting Intentions Update March 2023: AK Dissanayake (48%) leads Sajith Premadasa (37%) in Presidential Election voter preferences” Available at

<https://www.ihp.lk/publications/docs/SLOTSReport202309.pdf>

Related reports

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>

Institute for Health Policy, March 2023, “Public continue to hold deeply unfavourable views of almost all politicians across all parties” Available at: <https://www.ihp.lk/publications/docs/SLOTSReport202307.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), with multiple imputation to account for uncertainties in its modelling, exploiting data from all SLOTS interviews to estimate voting in a particular month.

The March 2023 MRP estimates are based on 521 interviews conducted in March 2023, and 10,601 interviews conducted overall from 31 August 2021–9 April 2023, with a margin of error assessed as 4–5% for AK Dissanayake and Sajith Premadasa, and 1–3% for the other two potential candidates.

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.