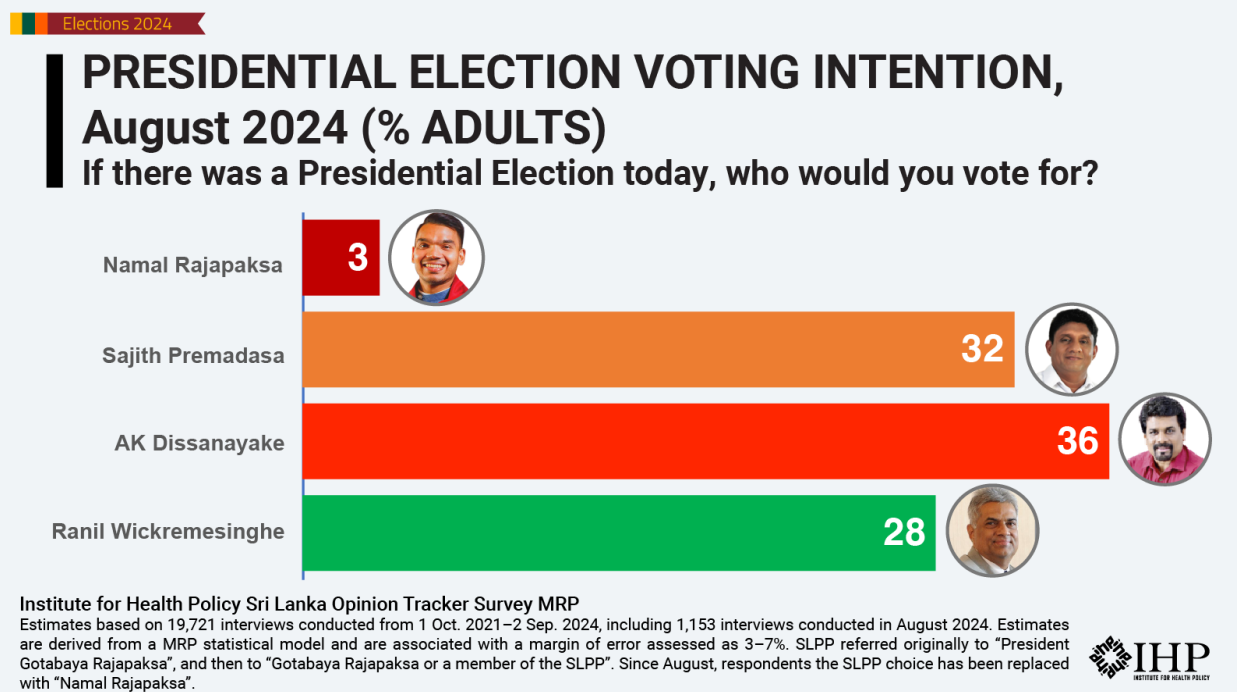AK Dissanayake and Sajith Premadasa led in August voting intent amongst all adults, but continuing shift towards President Ranil Wickremesinghe

IHP MRP Presidential Election Update August 2024

IHP's Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey (SLOTS) MRP provisional estimates of Presidential Election voting intent for August 2024 show NPP/JVP leader AK Dissanayake and SJB leader Sajith Premadasa led in voting preferences of all adults ahead of the September Presidential Election. None of the four major party presidential candidates had support of a majority of the adult voters. NPP/JVP leader AK Dissanayake led with 36% of all adults, followed by SJB leader Sajith Premadasa with 32%, Pres. Ranil Wickremesinghe with 28% and Namal Rajapaksa with 3%. Estimates are associated with margins of error of 3–7%.

Elections 2024

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION VOTING INTENTION, August 2024 (% ADULTS)
If there was a Presidential Election today, who would you vote for?

Candidate	%
Namal Rajapaksa	3
Sajith Premadasa	32
AK Dissanayake	36
Ranil Wickremesinghe	28

Institute for Health Policy Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey MRP
Estimates based on 19,721 interviews conducted from 1 Oct. 2021–2 Sep. 2024, including 1,153 interviews conducted in August 2024. Estimates are derived from a MRP statistical model and are associated with a margin of error assessed as 3–7%. SLPP referred originally to "President Gotabaya Rajapaksa", and then to "Gotabaya Rajapaksa or a member of the SLPP". Since August, respondents the SLPP choice has been replaced with "Namal Rajapaksa".
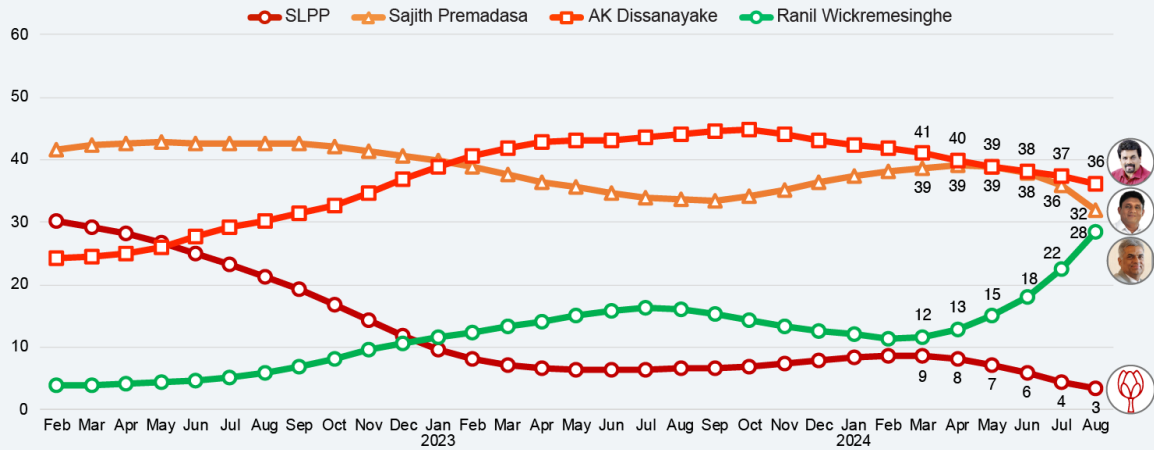
IHP

Support for Ranil Wickremesinghe has been rising from March through August 2024, while there have been small declines in support for AK Dissanayake, Sajith Premadasa, and SLPP during the same period.

IHP Executive Director, Dr Ravi Rannan-Eliya, commenting on the narrow race, said: "Our August polling indicates a tightening race in which no candidate will get close to half the vote on the first count. While this indicates that no candidate has succeeded in exciting a majority of voters, it also means that it is increasingly likely that the 2024 election will be the first presidential poll decided on a count of second and third preferences. We urge civil society and the Elections Commission to intensify efforts to educate voters about using their preferences to ensure that every vote counts."

IHP SLOTS PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION VOTING INTENTION TRACKER(% ADULTS)

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

SLPP — Sajith Premadasa — AK Dissanayake — Ranil Wickremesinghe

Institute for Health Policy Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey MRP
Monthly estimates based on 19,721 interviews conducted from 1 Oct. 2021-2 Sep. 2024. Estimates are derived using a MRP statistical model and are associated with margins of error assessed as 1-7%, depending on the month and candidate.
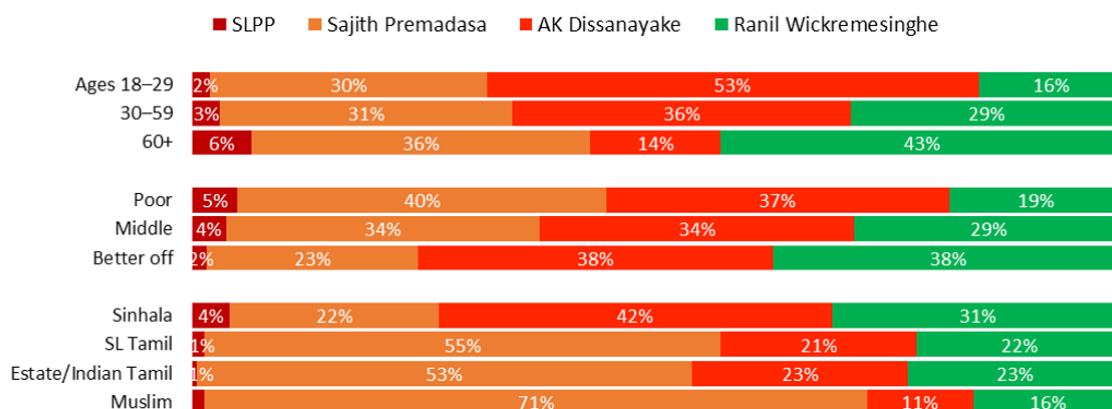
Analysis of the MRP model estimates for August reveal differences in the support base for each candidate. Support for AK Dissanayake was strongest among the youth, with a majority (53%) supporting him, and among Sinhala voters (42%). The most affluent third of voters (38%) supported both AK Dissanayake and Ranil Wickremesinghe. In contrast, Sajith Premadasa led among the poorest third of voters (40%).

More than half of Sri Lankan Tamils (55%) and Estate/ Indian Tamils (53%) supported Sajith Premadasa, while two-thirds of Muslims (71%) backed him. Ranil Wickremesinghe's support increased with age, reaching 43% among those aged 60 years and older.

Presidential Election voting intention by demographic characteristics, August 2024 (% adults)

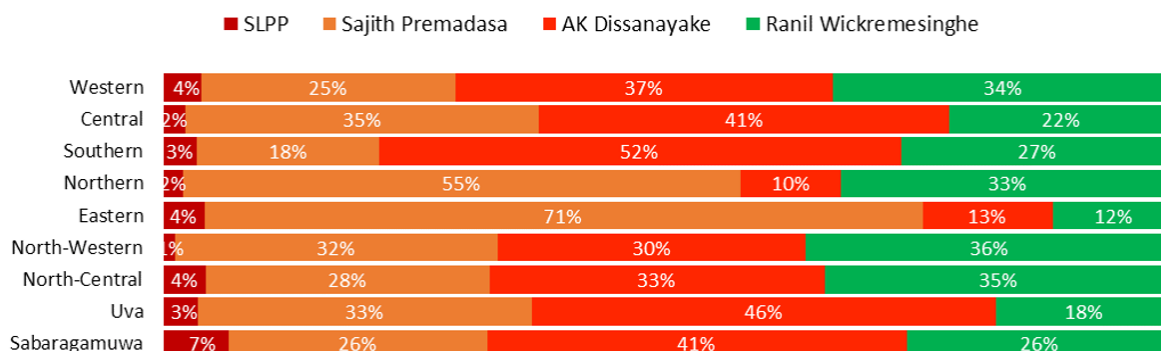If there was a Presidential Election today, who would you vote for?

Legend: ■ SLPP ■ Sajith Premadasa ■ AK Dissanayake ■ Ranil Wickremesinghe

Group	SLPP	Sajith Premadasa	AK Dissanayake	Ranil Wickremesinghe
Ages 18–29	2%	30%	53%	16%
30–59	3%	31%	36%	29%
60+	6%	36%	14%	43%
Poor	5%	40%	37%	19%
Middle	4%	34%	34%	29%
Better off	2%	23%	38%	38%
Sinhala	4%	22%	42%	31%
SL Tamil	1%	55%	21%	22%
Estate/Indian Tamil	1%	53%	23%	23%
Muslim		71%	11%	16%

Institute for Health Policy Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey MRP
Estimates are generated by a MRP statistical model using 19,721 interviews conducted from 1 Oct. 2021–2 Sep. 2024, with estimates projected for the middle of August.

AK Dissanayake led in all provinces except the Northern and Eastern, where he trailed in third place behind Sajith Premadasa and Ranil Wickremesinghe.

Presidential Election voting intention by Province, August 2024

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

Legend: ■ SLPP ■ Sajith Premadasa ■ AK Dissanayake ■ Ranil Wickremesinghe

Province	SLPP	Sajith Premadasa	AK Dissanayake	Ranil Wickremesinghe
Western	4%	25%	37%	34%
Central	2%	35%	41%	22%
Southern	3%	18%	52%	27%
Northern	2%	55%	10%	33%
Eastern	4%	71%	13%	12%
North-Western	2%	32%	30%	36%
North-Central	4%	28%	33%	35%
Uva	3%	33%	46%	18%
Sabaragamuwa	7%	26%	41%	26%

Institute for Health Policy Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey MRP
Estimates are generated by a MRP statistical model using 19,721 interviews conducted from 1 Oct. 2021–2 Sep. 2024, with estimates projected for the middle of August.
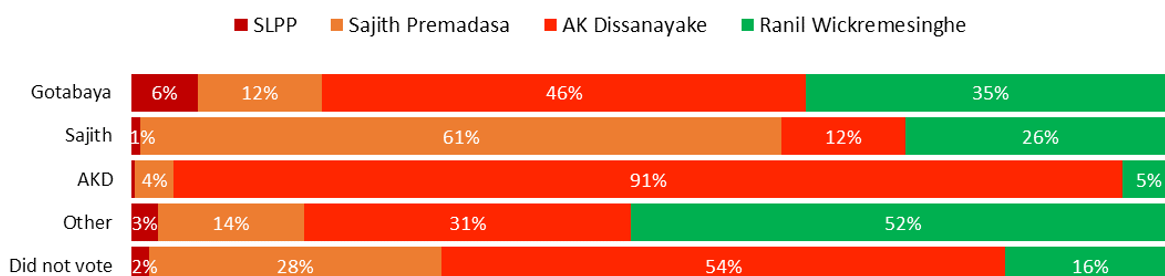
Both AK Dissanayake and Ranil Wickremesinghe drew a large part of their support from Gotabaya Rajapaksa 2019 voters, with only one in eight of these voters backing Sajith Premadasa.

Presidential Election voting intention by 2019 Presidential Election voting history, August 2024

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

■ SLPP   ■ Sajith Premadasa   ■ AK Dissanayake   ■ Ranil Wickremesinghe

Category	SLPP	Sajith Premadasa	AK Dissanayake	Ranil Wickremesinghe
Gotabaya	6%	12%	46%	35%
Sajith	1%	61%	12%	26%
AKD		4%	91%	5%
Other	3%	14%	31%	52%
Did not vote	2%	28%	54%	16%

Institute for Health Policy Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey MRP

Estimates are generated by a MRP statistical model using 19,721 interviews conducted from 1 Oct. 2021–2 Sep. 2024, with estimates projected for the middle of August.

Further analysis of voting intent based on public opinion about the Aragalaya shows that adults with favourable views of the Aragalaya were more likely to support AK Dissanayake than those with an unfavourable view (37% versus 27%) in August. In contrast, Ranil Wickremesinghe and Namal Rajapaksa did better amongst those with a negative view of the Aragalaya, whilst Sajith Premadasa did equally well in both groups.

A comparable but weaker relationship was seen in relation to voters' views about whether the rich-poor gap in the country is a good or bad thing. AK Dissanayake did 3 points better in those who thought the gap was bad versus those who thought it was good, whilst Ranil Wickremesinghe did 4 points worse.
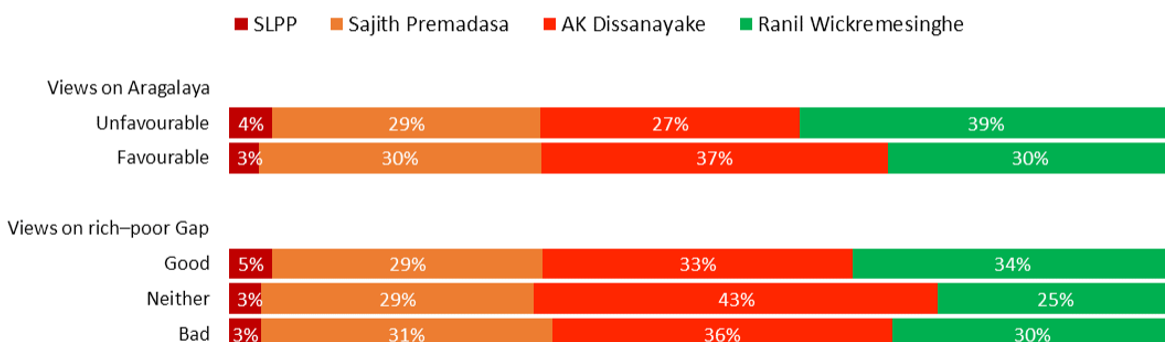
Dr. Rannan-Eliya commented: "Our polling indicates that overwhelming majorities of Sri Lankans have a favourable view of the Aragalaya and think that the poor-rich gap has been increasing in Sri Lanka and that this is bad. But it's surprising that none of the leading candidates have been able to effectively tap into these sentiments with a winning message."

Presidential Election voting intention by views of Aragalaya and Rich–Poor Gap, August 2024

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

■ SLPP   ■ Sajith Premadasa   ■ AK Dissanayake   ■ Ranil Wickremesinghe

Category	SLPP	Sajith Premadasa	AK Dissanayake	Ranil Wickremesinghe
Views on Aragalaya				
Unfavourable	4%	29%	27%	39%
Favourable	3%	30%	37%	30%
Views on rich–poor Gap				
Good	5%	29%	33%	34%
Neither	3%	29%	43%	25%
Bad	3%	31%	36%	30%

Institute for Health Policy Sri Lanka Opinion Tracker Survey MRP

Estimates are generated by a MRP statistical model using 19,721 interviews conducted from 1 Oct. 2021–2 Sep. 2024, with estimates projected for the middle of August.

These estimates use the IHP SLOTS Multilevel Regression and Poststratification (MRP) model (01/2024 revision). This update is for all adults and uses data from 19,721 interviews conducted from 1 Oct. 2021 to 2 Sep. 2024, including 1,153 interviews during August 2024. One hundred bootstraps were run to capture model uncertainty, with margins of error assessed at 1–7% for August. IHP has expanded its interview numbers in the weeks leading to the Presidential Election to provide better estimates.

IHP's SLOTS MRP methodology first estimates the relationship between a wide variety of characteristics about respondents and their opinions – in this case, 'If there was a Presidential Election today, who would you vote for?'– in a multilevel statistical model that also smooths month to month changes. It then uses a large data file calibrated to the national population to predict voting intent in each month since Oct. 2021, based on what the multilevel model indicates about their probability of voting for various parties ('post-stratification') at each point in time. The multilevel model was estimated 100 times to reflect underlying uncertainties in the model and to obtain margins of error. The voting intent results for previous months have changed in this update as more data were collected after the last release and these changes are within the margin of error.