How Japan’s next PM will be chosen

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) will vote for their new president, with outgoing leader Shinzo Abe having resigned over a flare-up of a chronic condition. Japan Correspondent Walter Sim looks at how the race stacks up.

**KEY DATES**

- **SEPT 14*:** LDP lawmakers 394
- **SEPT 16:** Parliament will inaugurate the new PM. As the LDP has a majority in the Diet, its leader is traditionally the prime minister
- **SEPT 2021:** The next LDP presidential election. While the LDP leader has a three-year tenure, the winner this time will only serve the remainder of Mr Abe’s term
- **BY OCT 2021:** A Lower House election is due to elect the government
- **Aug 28, 2020:** Announced resignation over health problems

**STATE OF PLAY**

The LDP is ruled by factional politics, and lawmakers typically vote along faction lines. This has led many early hopefuls who had indicated interest to drop out of the race. Here are the three contenders.

**Hosoda faction**
- Leader: Ex-chief Cabinet secretary Hiroyuki Hosoda
- Key members: PM Shinzo Abe, Economy Minister Yasutoshi Nishimura, ex-defence chief Tomomi Inada, ex-education minister Hakubun Shimomura

**Aso faction**
- Leader: DPM Taro Aso
- Key member: Defence Minister Taro Kono

**Nikai faction**
- Leader: LDP secretary-general Toshihiro Nikai

**Takeshita faction**
- Leader: Ex-reconstruction minister Wataru Takeshita
- Key members: Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, Health Minister Katsunobu Kato

**FUMIO KISHIDA, 63**
- Ex-foreign minister
- LDP Policy Research Council chairman

**SHIGERU ISHIBA, 63**
- Ex-defence minister
- Ex-LDP secretary-general

**YOSHIHIDE SUGA, 71**
- Chief Cabinet Secretary

**SHINZO ABE**

- Japan’s longest-serving prime minister
- Born Sept 21, 1954, in Tokyo
- Son of a former foreign minister and grandson of a former PM
- Leader of Liberal Democratic Party
- Graduated from Seikei University
- Worked at Kobe Steel before turning to politics
- First time elected to Parliament
- 1993 First term as prime minister but resigned citing health problems in part
- 2006-2007 Second term as PM
- 2020-2021 Announced resignation over health problems

**JAPAN**

- Prefecture chapter representatives 141 (3 x 47)
- TOTAL: 535

*Includes Okinawa

**NOTE:** Typically, rank-and-file grassroots members will also get their say