

Ariel Sharon's possible successors

Ehud Olmert has assumed the post of acting Prime Minister following Ariel Sharon's stroke, which has plunged Israel into political upheaval and raised the question of succession in Sharon's newly-formed centrist *Kadima* party



Ehud Olmert, 60

Vice Prime Minister

Former Jerusalem mayor joined government in 2003. Became Sharon's closest ally in right-wing **Likud** party. Has taken dovish stance towards peace process with Palestinians and quickly followed Sharon out of Likud to join Kadima

Tzipi Livni, 47

Justice Minister

Experienced lawyer, key dovish figure since joining Likud in 2001. Most senior woman among Sharon's allies and one of Israel's most popular politicians. Supported Sharon's **disengagement plan**, before joining Kadima

Shaul Mofaz, 57

Defence Minister

Former chief of staff of **Israeli Defense Forces** joined Likud in 2003. Employed tough tactics to counter Palestinian uprising, but backed Sharon's **Gaza** pullout plan. Defected to Kadima after brief attempt to win Likud party leadership

Shimon Peres, 82. Veteran former premier left Labour party in November to support Sharon. Vastly experienced but age makes him unlikely candidate