

Japan's Abe eyes becoming prime minister

Chief Cabinet Secretary Shinzo Abe, 51, is the clear favourite to succeed Junichiro Koizumi as president of the Liberal Democratic Party, meaning he is virtually certain to be elected Japan's youngest postwar premier by the LDP-controlled parliament when Koizumi steps down on September 30



SHINZO ABE

● Political blue-blood – father **Shintaro Abe** was foreign minister and grandfather **Nobusuke Kishi** was prime minister in 1950s

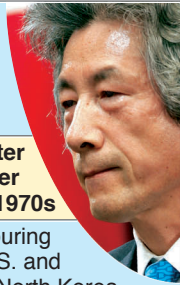
● Shot to prominence in 2002 after pressing North Korea to surrender Japanese citizens kidnapped in 1970s

● Hawkish on security issues, favouring expanding security alliance with U.S. and taking tough stand with China and North Korea

● Like Koizumi, has made visits to **Yasukuni** war shrine, angering China and South Korea

● Supports revising Japan's postwar pacifist constitution and creating Japanese versions of U.S. National Security Council and CIA

● Economic priorities include spending reform and comprehensive, mid- to long-term tax reform



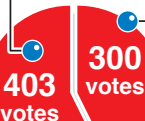
LDP logo

VOTING SYSTEM

FIRST ROUND: Winner must obtain simple majority of **703** votes

LDP members of parliament

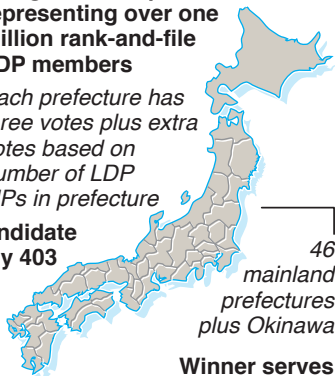
Assigned to **47 prefectures**, representing over one million rank-and-file LDP members



Each prefecture has three votes plus extra votes based on number of LDP MPs in prefecture

RUN-OFF: If no candidate wins majority, only 403 LDP MPs vote in second ballot

Candidate with most first-round votes could lose in run-off



46 mainland prefectures plus Okinawa

Winner serves three-year term



Other candidates include Foreign Minister **Taro Aso** (top) and Finance Minister **Sadakazu Tanigaki**