

3 October 2025

Looking beyond the leadership vote

Key takeaways

- Koizumi Shinjirō remains the favorite heading into the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) leadership election on Saturday, 4 October.
- While the new party leader will have ten days to negotiate a broader coalition before the Diet selects a new prime minister on 15 October, coalition talks could be time consuming and the next LDP leader will likely take the premiership initially as the head of a minority government.
- The next prime minister will not only have to manage coalition talks but also prepare for a visit by US President Donald Trump and two major regional summits, while preparing a supplemental budget and next year's general budget.

The LDP will vote on its new leader starting at 13:00 local time on Saturday, 4 October. JAPAN FORESIGHT will be following the voting in real time. Please reach out to tobias@japanforesight.com with any questions as the vote proceeds.

Election day

The campaign to be the next leader of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has concluded, and the party's lawmakers will gather on **Saturday, 4 October at 13:00 local time** to cast their votes and tabulate the votes of the party's rank-and-file supporters, which were submitted ahead of the 4 October meeting.






Ahead of the vote, there has been little to suggest that the basic dynamics of the race – outlined [here](#) – have changed. It will be difficult for any candidate to win a majority in the first round and avoid a runoff due to the five-candidate field, **but Koizumi Shinjirō and Takaichi Sanae remain the most likely candidates to finish in the top two spots**

and Koizumi is the favorite to win overall. Simply put, Takaichi, despite her popularity with a significant segment of the LDP's base, appears to have been unable to overcome the decline in the party's right wing through electoral defeats in the 2024 general and 2025 upper house elections, giving her a smaller electoral base than in 2024. Meanwhile, in contrast to 2024, Koizumi's support with rank-and-file supporters has largely held up and he enjoys a sizable advantage among parliamentarians that could make it difficult for Takaichi to pull off an upset in the runoff.

At any rate, **the results of the first round of voting will be announced at approximately 14:20 local time** and, if necessary, **the results of the runoff will likely be announced by 15:40 local time.**

THE LDP DECIDES

Key details for the LDP's 4 October election

SCHEDULE	CANDIDATES	THE CAMPAIGN BY THE NUMBERS
<p>13:00 JST LDP lawmakers vote in the LDP leadership election</p> <p>14:20 JST Results of the first round of voting are announced</p> <p>15:40 JST Results of the second round of voting are announced</p> <p>16:00 JST New LDP leader formally confirmed</p> <p>18:00 JST New leader holds a press conference</p>	 <p>Koizumi Shinjirō (44)</p>  <p>Hayashi Yoshimasa (64)</p>  <p>Takaichi Sanae (64)</p>  <p>Motegi Toshimitsu (69)</p>  <p>Kobayashi Takayuki (50)</p>	<p>915,574 <i>Dues-paying members eligible to vote in the first round</i></p> <p>590 <i>Total votes in the first round</i></p> <p>295 <i>Number of voting lawmakers; also the number of votes decided by rank-and-file members in the first round</i></p> <p>342 <i>Number of votes cast in runoff if no candidate wins majority in first round; 295 lawmakers plus 47 prefectural chapters</i></p> <p>5 <i>Candidates running for the LDP leadership</i></p> <div style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold; margin-top: 10px;">JF</div> <div style="display: inline-block; vertical-align: middle; text-align: center;"> <div style="font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 2px;">J A P A N</div> <div style="font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 2px;">F O R E S I G H T</div> </div> <p style="font-size: 0.8em;">https://www.japanforesight.com</p>

The path to the premiership

Once the LDP's new president is confirmed, **the new leader will likely have until 15 October before a special session of the Diet reopens to vote on a new prime minister.** During this time the next leader will announce a new party leadership lineup as well as an outline of the new cabinet. If Koizumi wins, he is likely to announce a leadership team that represents a broad cross-section of the party, reflecting his emphasis on party unity; it is less clear whether Takaichi would take the same approach if elected. While the LDP leadership candidates have discussed extensively the need for expanding the ruling coalition, **it is unlikely that the LDP and Kōmeitō will be able to conclude talks with a third coalition partner – Ishin no Kai is widely thought to be the most plausible partner – before the Diet votes on the next prime minister,** meaning that the next LDP leader will in all likelihood become the next prime minister heading a minority government, at least initially.

It is highly unlikely that opposition parties will be able to coordinate on a prime ministerial candidate from an opposition party, whether Constitutional Democratic Party (CDP) leader Noda Yoshihiko or Democratic Party for the People (DPFP) leader Tamaki Yūichirō. As in 2024, when a significant number of lawmakers abstained in the second round of voting in the Diet, securing Ishiba Shigeru's election on the strength of LDP and Kōmeitō votes, the LDP's next leader will likely benefit from a similar outcome.

The next leader will likely open discussions with potential coalition partners before 15 October, but these talks could conceivably take several weeks (or longer). The three parties would not only have to agree on a joint policy program but will also have to consider whether to coordinate on candidate selection – Kōmeitō has insisted that any coalition talks have to include electoral cooperation – and the distribution of cabinet posts. Of course, any deal reached between the parties' representatives will also have to be broadly acceptable to the party's parliamentarians, and it could take time to secure the agreement of each party to a new coalition. While Takaichi has said that she would like to conclude coalition talks before forming a new government, Koizumi has struck a more realistic tone, as have the leaders of Ishin no Kai and Kōmeitō. To be sure, this does not preclude the possibility of an expanded coalition, but it could take longer than expected to conclude negotiations.

The prime minister's inbox

While the LDP's next leader will have to focus on coalition negotiations in order to regain government majorities in both houses of the Diet, he or she will also be immediately tested on the world stage, with US President Donald Trump expected to visit Japan on or around 27 October. The next prime minister will also be expected to attend the East Asian Summit in Malaysia on 26 October and the APEC summit in South Korea 31 October-1 November. Meanwhile, concurrent with coalition negotiations, the new government will presumably be drawing up plans for a supplemental budget expected to be introduced to the Diet before the end of the year, while also managing the budgetary process for the FY2026 budget, which is already underway.

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