

Abe allowed to stay on as party leader

by UPI

TOKYO -- Japan's LDP-led coalition has lost its majority in Parliament's upper house, but Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was allowed Monday to stay on as party head. Results of the election to the 242-seat upper house showed Abe's Liberal Democratic Party-led coalition holds 105 seats compared to the opposition's 137 -- the first such loss of majority since 1998. Abe had owned up to the impending bad news. "This humiliating setback is my responsibility," he said. Kyodo news service reported an LDP board Monday decided to allow Abe to remain as president of the ruling party. The LDP-led coalition has a comfortable majority in the more powerful lower house, which elects the prime minister. Kyodo said with the upper house loss, however, Abe will find it tougher to get his government's programs through Parliament. The report said the LDP planned to continue its partnership with the New Komeito party in the coalition and support the administration under Abe. Abe took over as prime minister last September but has seen his popularity take a severe hit since then because of government mistakes in the pension plans and political funds scandals, Kyodo said.

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