
Japan's Ruling Party Faces Criticism Over Slush Fund Endorsements



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Doha, January 28, 2026: Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) has come under renewed criticism after endorsing more than 40 candidates linked to a political slush fund scandal for the upcoming House of Representatives election, Xinhua and Japanese media outlets reported.

The finalized candidate list, confirmed on Tuesday, includes numerous LDP members implicated in the 2023 “slush fund” scandal. Many of these candidates had previously lost party endorsement in the 2024 general election following internal disciplinary action.

For this election, the LDP eased restrictions, allowing most controversial candidates to run in both single-seat constituencies and proportional representation blocs, a move seen as boosting their chances of winning. Critics argue that such decisions could further damage public trust in the party and the Takaichi administration.

Prime Minister and LDP President Sanae Takaichi has faced criticism for not pursuing a full investigation into the scandal or implementing major political reforms. Observers note that voters’ memories of the scandal remain fresh, and re-endorsing candidates previously rejected could tarnish the party’s image ahead of the polls.

The slush fund scandal reportedly involved LDP factions directing lawmakers to sell political fundraising tickets beyond their quotas without reporting revenue, then funneling the surplus back as kickbacks. Since taking office in October 2025, Takaichi has appointed several figures implicated in the scandal to key posts, while facing accusations herself over an excessive political donation.