

Pezeshkian formally sworn in as Iran's President

TEHRAN, July 30 (IANS)

IRANIAN President Masoud Pezeshkian on Tuesday took the oath of office before the Parliament, with dignitaries from nearly 90 countries present, to formally start his four-year term.

After Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf delivered a speech at the start of the ceremony, Pezeshkian, 69, took an oath on the holy Quran. As part of the oath, the President swore to use all his talents and qualities to perform the duties he has assumed as the President of the Islamic Republic.

He then addressed the audience in the Parliament.

The inauguration ceremony, which began at 4 pm (local time) was attended by delegations from 88 countries and



(R) Newly-elected President Masoud Pezeshkian takes his oath, as Judiciary Chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei listens during a ceremony at the Parliament in Tehran, Iran. (PTI)

senior Iranian Government officials. Among those present at the ceremony were Tajikistan President Emomali Rahmon, and Prime Ministers Irakli Kobakhidze of Georgia, Nikol Pashinyan of Armenia, Hussein Arnous of Syria, and Manuel Marrero Cruz of Cuba.

Russia's Duma Speaker Vyacheslav Volodin, South African Foreign Minister

Ronald Lamola, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Ahmed Mohamed Abdel Ati, Saudi Arabian Minister of Interior Abdulaziz bin Saud bin Naif, Bahraini Foreign Minister Abdullatif bin Rashid Al Zayani and European Union's Deputy Foreign Policy chief Enrique Mora were also present.

India was represented by Union Road Transport and

Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari. Pakistan Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar led his country's delegation.

Among other foreign leaders that are participating are Qatar's Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Sultan bin Saad bin Sultan Al Muraikhi, Kazakhstan Senate Chairman Ashimbayev Maulen Sagathanuly, Malaysia's House of Representatives Speaker Tan Sri Dato Johari bin Abdul, and Senegal National Assembly's President Amadou Mame Diop, Hamas' Head of the Political Bureau, Ismail Haniyeh, Hezbollah's Deputy Secretary General Sheikh Naim Qassem, Palestinian Islamic Jihad Movement Secretary-General Ziad al-Nakhalah, and Yemen's Ansarullah spokesman Mohammad Abdul Salam also participated in the ceremony.

OFK Khamaria

to equip IAF with indigenously made 500-kg air-to-air firing PGB

EXCLUSIVE

By Ashish Rajput

THE Indian Air Force (IAF) will be equipped with advanced ammunition 'Precision Guided Bomb' (PGB) being indigenously developed at Ordnance Factory (OFK) Khamaria. The 500-kg air-to-air firing precision bomb is an inertial guidance system to destroy its target from long distances even under adverse visibility. Along with strengthening the ammunition power of the Indian Air Force, PGB-500 Project will also provide a big workload to the

Ordnance Factory Khamaria.

Ordnance Factory Khamaria, Chief General Manager, MN Haldar, while talking to 'The Hindustan', informed that the project of Precision Guided Bomb of 500-kg is in developing stage. They have successfully developed two inert PGBs for trials by the users. The technology was developed by Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and total 24 shells have been provided to OFK for development of ammunition indigenously. OFK has

handed over inert bombs

for further user trials and its induction in the Indian Air Force. Once



The initial design of advanced Precision Guided Bomb of 500-kg.

OFK has handed over inert bombs to DRDO for further user trials and its induction in the Indian Air Force.

initial trials will be completed, DRDO will provide the Guidance Kits for streamlining production of another advanced indigenous ammunition for the Indian Air Force. The indigenously developed 500-kg Precision Guided Bomb was test fired by Sukhoi jet at the Pokhran

test range in Rajasthan. Successful test firing was a major achievement for the DRDO as the bomb hit its target with precision. The advanced weapon system is also capable for carrying different kinds of warheads. According to sources, the Precision Guided Bomb will provide a handsome workload to the OFK as its single unit is estimated to be around Rs 3 crore.

Wickremesinghe draws MPs from Oppn party for Presidential polls

COLOMBO, July 30 (PTI)

AT LEAST 75 MPs from the SLPP party have backed President Ranil Wickremesinghe's bid for re-election in the September 21 presidential poll even though the party run by the Rajapaksa family has threatened disciplinary action against them, it emerged on Tuesday.

The development comes a day after the Sri Lanka People's Front (SLPP, also known locally by its popular Sinhalese name, Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna), decided not to back President

Wickremesinghe, and instead field its own candidate in the presidential election. Wickremesinghe, 75, last week announced his candidacy as an independent.

"The SLPP's party's Podujana which met today has decided to field our own candidate under its own symbol of the flower bud," Sagara Kariyawasam, the General Secretary of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna, told reporters on Monday.

SLPP has been in disarray with several breakaways since former President Mahinda

Rajapaksa's younger brother Gotabaya Rajapaksa was ousted after the 2022 popular uprising over his inability to tackle the economic crisis and had backed Wickremesinghe then in Parliament to become President.

Pramitha Bandara Tennakoon, the State Minister of Defence, was the first to declare that he would back Wickremesinghe for President irrespective of the party decision. After the SLPP announcement, an extended group of SLPP MPs visited Wickremesinghe to pledge sup-

port defying the party line.

"We have over 75 SLPP MPs in our group to support the president," Premanath C Dolewatta, a SLPP MP said.

Meanwhile, on Tuesday, Wickremesinghe in a Facebook post said he was grateful to those who aligned with him to work towards reviving the economy after Sri Lanka had gone bankrupt in 2022.

He thanked the others who later joined and welcomed those wanting to join him.

Wickremesinghe, who is also the Finance Minister, stressed that cross-party support was

required to turn the island's economy around based on the IMF-prescribed reforms.

In April 2022, Sri Lanka declared its first-ever sovereign default since gaining independence from Britain in 1948. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) had made external debt restructuring conditional to the USD 2.9 billion bailout package, of which the third tranche was released to Sri Lanka in mid-June.

The Opposition has vowed to revise the IMF programme and remained critical of Wickremesinghe.

Eye on China, US boosting alliance with Philippines

MANILA, July 30 (AP)

WASHINGTON'S top diplomat and defence chief, in Manila for talks on Tuesday, will announce USD 500 million in military funding to boost Philippine defences and progress in a proposed military pact, given that China's increasingly aggressive actions in the region "will not stop," a Philippine official said.

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin called on President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, who has fortified Manila's decades-old treaty alliance with Washington as hostilities between Philippine and Chinese forces flared since last



Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr, center, greets US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, left, and US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin at the Malacanang presidential palace in Manila, Philippines on Tuesday. (AP/PTI)

year in the disputed South China Sea. Marcos has underscored the need for a US military presence for Asian stability and peace.

After the most violent face-off between Filipino and Chinese forces on June 17 in the Philippine-occupied Second Thomas Shoal, the countries announced an agreement last week on a temporary arrangement to prevent such clashes in the future.

Philippine forces transported food and other supplies and a fresh batch of navy personnel Saturday to Manila's territorial outpost at the shoal, which has been closely guarded by Beijing's forces, but no confrontations were reported

for the first time. The Philippines, however, would continue strengthening its territorial defence with the assistance of the US and other friendly military powers and build new security alliances, Philippine Ambassador to the US Jose Manuel Romualdez said. "The non-confrontational resupply and rotation is purely temporary. The People's Republic of China will not stop and we are determined just as well," Romualdez told the Associated Press.

The USD 500 million in US military financing to be announced by Austin in Manila would include funding for various Philippine navy equipment.

SHOOTERS CLINCH MIXED TEAM BRONZE

Manu-Sarabjot earns the country its second medal

Manu 1st Indian to win 2 medals in same Olympics



CHATEAUXROUX (France), July 30 (PTI)

A CALM and composed Manu Bhaker scripted history to become the first Indian ath-

lete in post-Independence era to win two Olympic medals in a single edition of the Games as she combined with an equally unruffled Sarabjot Singh to clinch the 10m air pistol mixed team bronze here on Tuesday.

The Indian pair defeated the Korean duo of Lee Wonoh and Oh Yeh jin 16-10 to earn the country its second medal at Chateauxroux's shooting range.

The 22-year-old Bhaker had earlier snared the women's 10m air pistol bronze medal at the same venue on Sunday, wiping off the memories of a horrendous Olympic debut in Tokyo 2020 where her pistol

Shooter Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh pose for a photograph at the Olympic Games Paris 2024, in Paris on Tuesday. (ANI)



President, PM hail Manu, Sarabjot

NEW DELHI, July 30 (PTI)

MANU Bhaker's consistency and composure drew effusive praise as President Draupadi Murmu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the country's sporting fraternity hailed the young shooter for becoming the first Indian athlete in post-Independence era to win two medals in a single Olympic Games.

"Our shooters continue to make us proud! Congratulations to @real-manubhaker and Sarabjot Singh for winning the Bronze medal in the 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event at the #Olympics. Both of them have shown great skills and teamwork. India is incredibly delighted," PM Modi wrote on "X". "For Manu, this is her second consecutive Olympic medal, showcasing her consistent excellence and dedication. #Cheer4Bharat."

President Murmu also shared a post on social media, congratulating the Indian shooters.

"Congratulations to Manu Bhaker and Sarabjot Singh for winning bronze medal for India in the mixed team 10 metre air pistol event for shooting!," Murmu wrote.

"Manu Bhaker has created history, becoming the first woman shooter from India to win two medals in the same Olympic games. She has done us immensely proud. I wish her and Sarabjot Singh many more laurels in the future."

malfunctioned leaving her in tears.

Before her, British-Indian athlete Norman Pritchard had won two silver medals in 200m sprint and 200m hurdles at the 1900 Olympics but that achievement had come in the

pre-Independence era.

While it is a massive achievement for women's sport in the country, Tuesday's medal is also redemption for Sarabjot, who had failed to make the men's 10m air

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