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Kharge hopes for Lok Sabha encore in Upper House

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NEW DELHI, DHNS

Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge formally began his tenure as Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha at a time when the party has numerically diminished in the House where the Opposition is known to challenge the government on legislative issues.

The 78-year-old Kharge succeeded Congress veteran Ghulam Nabi Azad, whose tenure in the coveted post came to an end as he completed his term as a member of the Upper House.

"The Chairman, Rajya Sabha has accorded recognition to Shri Mallikarjun Kharge, Leader of the Indian National Congress Party in the Rajya Sabha, as the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sab-

ha, w.e.f. the 16th February 2021," a Parliament Bulletin issued here on Tuesday said.

Kharge, who had proved himself as an aggressive Opposition leader in the previous Lok Sabha, hopes to do an encore in the new role in the Upper House but is acutely aware of the challenges of bringing together the Opposition forces to counter Modi government in Parliament.



Mallikarjun Kharge

"A singer, however good, also requires the support of his fellow musicians to deliver a spellbinding performance," he told DH in an informal interaction.

The Congress has 36 members in the Rajya Sabha, virtually half of the num-

bers it had in 2014 when the BJP came to power with an absolute majority under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The party is hopeful of a supporting act from others such as DMK, NCP and TMC. The Opposition has accused Modi government of steam-rolling legislative agenda in the Parliament on its superior numbers with scant regard to Parliamentary practices.

However, the Congress had come across as a divided house in the recent Budget Session of Parliament with the party allowing discussion on the Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in the Rajya Sabha, while stalling the proceedings for a week in the Lok Sabha.

Modi had hit out at the Congress for its differential Parliamentary strategy contending that such a party cannot work for the betterment of the nation.