



Queen Elizabeth II

For Prelims: Queen Elizabeth II and her Reign, Commonwealth of Nations, International Relations, Monarchy.

For Mains: Constitutional Monarchy.

Why in News?

Queen Elizabeth II, Britain's longest-reigning monarch died after 70 years on the throne at the age of 96.

- After the passing of Queen Elizabeth II, the reign was passed on to her eldest son Charles, the **former Prince of Wales**. He will henceforth be addressed as **King Charles III** and will be conferred **with all the powers the late Queen held as Head of State** in the **British Constitutional Monarchy**.

Who was Queen Elizabeth II?

- **About:**
 - Elizabeth Alexandra Mary, officially Elizabeth II was born on 21st April, 1926, London, England.
 - Elizabeth was the elder daughter of Prince Albert, duke of York, and his wife, Lady Elizabeth Bowes-Lyon.
 - In 1947 Princess **Elizabeth married Prince Philip** at London's Westminster Abbey.
 - Their first child, Prince Charles, was born in 1948. A daughter, Anne, arrived in 1950, followed by Andrew in 1960 and Edward in 1964.
 - She was crowned at **Westminster Abbey on June 2, 1953**, in front of 8,500 assembled guests.
- **Key Facts:**
 - Queen Elizabeth II is the world's longest-serving monarch, whose reign of almost seven decades is the oldest and longest-reigning monarch in British history.
 - In September 2015 **she surpassed her great-great-grandmother Queen Victoria**, who reigned for 63 years and seven months.
 - In 2016, Elizabeth also **became the longest-reigning monarch in the world** with the death of King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand.
 - In 2022, she became the **second-longest-reigning monarch in world history**, behind 17th century French King Louis XIV, who took the throne at age 4.

What is Constitutional Monarchy?

- Constitutional monarchy is a system of government in which **a monarch shares power with a constitutionally organized government**.
- The monarch may be the de facto head of state or a purely ceremonial leader.
- The constitution allocates the rest of the government's power to the legislature and judiciary.

- Britain became a constitutional monarchy **under the Whigs**.

What are the Roles and Powers of British Monarchy?

- **About:**
 - The **British Monarchy is a constitutional monarchy**, because being the Sovereign Head of State, the ability to **make and pass legislation resides with an elected Parliament**.
 - The British monarch reigns but does not rule.
 - Other constitutional monarchies include **Belgium, Cambodia, Jordan, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and Thailand**.
 - The monarch's powers or role in modern-day Britain is now **largely ceremonial**.
 - The monarch "has to **remain strictly neutral with respect to political matters**."
- **Roles and Powers:**
 - **Appointment of Prime Minister and government:**
 - The Monarch appoints the Prime Minister who **enjoys the majority support of MPs**.
 - Once the leader of a party wins general elections, the Head of State invites them to Buckingham Palace to form the government.
 - The discretionary power to appoint or dismiss a Prime Minister **no longer lies with the monarch**.
 - **Opening the Parliament:**
 - The Monarch opens the Parliamentary year with the **State Opening Ceremony**, during which he/she delivers an address **about the executive's planned policies and priorities in the House of Lords**.
 - **Assenting legislation:**
 - The sovereign gives **his/her Royal Assent to the bills passed in the House of Lords and Commons** but that is now essentially a rubber-stamping exercise as the last time a bill denied the Royal Assent was in 1707 by Queen Anne.
 - **Commonwealth Realms:**
 - The Monarch is also the head of the [Commonwealth of Nations](#), an association which is a **product of the erstwhile British empire**.
 - It consists of **56 independent nations** with a population of 2.4 billion.

How were the Bilateral Relations with Britain under her Reign?

- She visited her first time to India in 1961 with her husband King Philip, she was accorded a **huge and friendly reception**, and after that, she visited India two more times during her reign.
- The first visit of the Queen to India was very crucial because after independence India was overcoming the **damage caused by British rule**.
- She built a unique relationship of empathy with India, which was not easy, she was respected by every citizen of India.
- Out of respect, the Nizam of Hyderabad **gifted the famous Cartier tiara and a diamond necklace of her choice** for the queen's wedding in 1947.
- The Queen's second visit happened in 1983 when President Giani Zail Singh invited the royal couple and hoisted them in the parade at the prestigious Rashtrapati Bhavan, she visited Mother Teresa and honoured her contribution to society.
- The relationship between India and the United Kingdom has seen many ups and downs but because of the charismatic nature of Queen Elizabeth the second **it always becomes easy to continue good faith in the commonwealth**.

[Source: IE](#)

