**Coronation of King Charles III**

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It took 50 years, but now it is happening, namely that the United Kingdom and Northern Ireland get a new Monarch and Head of State. Queen Elisabeth II passed away at the age of 96 on 8 September 2022, having been on the British throne for well over 70 years. In her lifetime, she was Queen Regent in 32 sovereign states and was Head of State of 15 realms. Upon his mother’s passing, King Charles III finally took over at the age of 73. He is also the head of the Church of England, also referred to as the Anglican Church.

This week on Saturday 6 May 2023, is history in the making, when King Charles III will be crowned to the post in Westminster Abbey in London, with his wife, Queen Camilla. But this time, essential for Pakistan, the British Head of State will not also be the Head of State of Pakistan, as was the case from 1947-1956, when the country was the Dominion of Pakistan, officially Pakistan. In 1956, it became the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, with its own President. In 1971, the East wing, today Bangladesh, separated from the West wing, today Pakistan.

[President, PM condole demise of ARY’s Salman Iqbal’s daughter](https://www.nation.com.pk/06-May-2023/president-pm-condole-demise-of-ary-s-salman-iqbal-s-daughter)

When Queen Elisabeth III’s father, King George VI, passed away on 6 February 1952, she and her husband Prince Philip were on a tour of Australia, New Zealand and Kenya, and on that particular date, they were holidaying in Kenya, which was that time a British colony. They had just moved to their Kenyan home of Sagana Lodge, after having spent a night at a tourist hotel called Treetops Hotel in Nairobi, when the news came, and they had to return hastily home to London. In Kenya, people said that she had come as a Princess and left as a Queen.

When Queen Elisabeth II ‘inherited the throne’, as the term goes, she was only 25 years of age, and she was crowned in Westminster Abbey on 24 March 1953 in a particularly lavish ceremony. This time, it is said that it will be toned down slightly, but let us see, as the Brits are expert organizers of royal state ceremonies. Even in the early years of TV in 1953, most of the coronation ceremony was televised (in black and white); this time, TV stations will go overboard, and it will be in colour, needless to say.

[IHC extends stay on by-polls for NA-95 seat](https://www.nation.com.pk/06-May-2023/ihc-extends-stay-on-by-polls-for-na-95-seat)

In the late fifties onwards, the British decolonization process in Africa began, and the British colonies and other dependencies began achieving independence, with Ghana, called the Gold Coast, being the first, in 1957, under the leadership of the legendary Prime Minister and President Kwame Nkrumah until 1966, at a time when there was still optimism for the future of the former colonies.

Kenya gained independence in 1963, and the country became the Republic of Kenya in 1964, with Prime Minister Jomo Kenyatta becoming President of the country. The British Queen was no longer the country’s head of the country. Kenya had been a colony and protectorate of importance in the huge British Empire, with a sizeable number of British settlers, a large number of Indians, Pakistanis and Sri Lankans, and smaller communities from other countries. Most people from the Sub-continent had come as skilled workers to build the railway lines from the 1890s and 1900s.

It is interesting to know that the current British Prime Minister Rishi Sunak, the first Hindu and the first of Sub-continental, Indian Punjabi, descent in the post, has East African heritage, with his father and mother being born in Kenya and Tanzania (Tanganyika), before they immigrated to the UK in the 1960s. Rishi Sunak was born in Southampton, England, in 1980. The Mayor of London since 2016, Sadiq Khan, and the new First Minister in Scotland and SNP chair, Humza Yousaf, are both of Pakistani descent.

[TTP making nexus with Baloch separatists, militants, warn experts](https://www.nation.com.pk/06-May-2023/ttp-making-nexus-with-baloch-separatists-militants-warn-experts)

A few former colonies and dependencies still have the British monarch as head of state, including Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and 11 other realms; nowadays there are talks about ending that old in many ways outdated tradition, indeed so because the countries have indigenous populations, too, and immigrants from many other countries than the UK and, obviously, most people being born and bred in the countries, not in the UK. Therefore, the British connection is less than it used to be, although a good number may still feel that the British heritage somehow plays a part in their identity.

Having been created in 1949 with less than ten members, the British Commonwealth of Nations has grown in number of members and importance over the years, not only symbolically, but also in more concrete terms with various cooperation agreements, currently with 56 member countries, mostly of former British colonies or other dependencies, but there are also other members, such as South Africa and Rwanda, and some other countries have also applied for membership. The fact that the English language has such a prominent role in the world today is partly an achievement of the Commonwealth, and it is also important to the future of the association, which in number of people comprises over two and half billion, out of the world’s total population of about eight billion people. Incidentally, India just recently became the world’s most populous country, having overtaken China. Pakistan is one of the world’s most populous countries, with some 230 million people and growing fast. Whether a country’s high population growth is good, is indeed another question. Pakistan is the second largest Muslim country in the World, after Indonesia.

[Pakistani-Norwegian kicks off world tour on motorbike from Norway](https://www.nation.com.pk/06-May-2023/pakistani-norwegian-kicks-off-world-tour-on-motorbike-from-norway)

Now then, back to the Commonwealth, it was said Queen Elisabeth II paid particular attention to the Commonwealth, and she was the symbolic head of the association, a role that King Charles III has now taken on, a special Commonwealth flag is used, not the British Union Jack when officiating at Commonwealth events.

The USA is not a member of the Commonwealth, but Canada is. However the 13 original colonies in America were British colonies, long before the Commonwealth existed, but then they declared independence from Britain and USA was created in 1776.

The similar association of former French colonies, La Francophonie, does not quite have the same prominence as the Commonwealth, with a smaller total number of people in its 54 member countries, and over 30 associate members across all the world’s continents. Thus, La Francophonie and the Alliance Francaise play important roles in language, culture and other fields.

It is interesting to know that most former colonies and dependencies usually have good cooperation with the former colonial power. This is perhaps often for practical reasons in trade and other fields that are also in the interest of the weaker part. We should also note that there are good relations between the UK and Pakistan, in many cases that can have to do with direct contact through Pakistanis living in the UK or visiting the UK often. Sometimes, the feeling of ‘being quite British at heart’ is not quite logical, but nevertheless, it is still there, and the language, too, plays a great role.

[Smuggled sugar seized](https://www.nation.com.pk/06-May-2023/smuggled-sugar-seized)

We human beings are not always logical, and to have a hereditary monarchy is neither logical nor democratic. But it still also has its positive sides, including giving publicity to Britain, with trade profits and more. In any case, be it escapism or realism, let us take some time off this weekend and celebrate with the Brits and their royals.