

How Many Monarchies Exist?

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NOIDA, India—In modern monarchies, the power of a monarch—a King or Queen or Empress—is limited by laws, a constitution, and a democratic government body with a Parliament.

- Most monarchies today have ceremonial figureheads with minimal political powers.
- Commonwealth nations are the countries where the British crown once ruled or currently holds power.
- There are 42 countries where monarchies are present.

New Delhi: Hundreds of years ago when civilization was taking shape, the most common type of government was a monarchy. Monarchy is defined as a type of rule where a person rules a country or many countries. In ancient times, the monarchy was the only kind of government that ruled. But as the world evolved, countries liberalised and monarchy became more and more uncommon.

After Queen Elizabeth II's death, King Charles the Third has become the king of the commonwealth nations around the world. He will rule, completely or partially, the commonwealth nations. However, many commonwealth nations are now independent republics like India. But there are still several countries where the British crown holds power.

At present, if we ignore the countries where Charles the Third will rule because several countries where Queen Elizabeth the second held power, may change their minds in the coming months, there are 28 monarchies in the world.

Monarchy, in its current arrangement, exists in many forms. There are absolute monarchies where a person rules without any checks or balances. It is a rare kind, most modern monarchies are limited monarchies.

In modern monarchies, the power of a monarch—a king or queen or

empress—is limited by laws, a constitution, a democratic government body with parliament, etc. These limited monarchies can be further categorised into mixed monarchies or federal monarchies.

So, the bottom line is that today monarchies are not defined as they did a thousand years ago when a king ruled and collected taxes or exploited the citizens.

At present, monarchies align with the countries' interests and have partial—like the UK—or no power in policy-making, international affairs, and defence. Very few monarchies in the world have an undisputed rule of their king or queen.

Most of these monarchies today have ceremonial figureheads with minimal political powers. For instance, the British monarch—Queen Elizabeth the second and now king Charles the Third—is the head of State of 15 nations, including the UK, and possesses prestige, great wealth, and respect. However, the country is ruled by a Parliament and its head of the government, i.e. a Prime Minister.

Here's a look at the monarchies in the world.

The commonwealth realm

Commonwealth nations are the countries where the British crown once ruled or currently holds power.

- There are 15 countries—including the UK—where the British crown holds power. It is the most popular and biggest monarchy and is called the Monarchy of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Queen Elizabeth the second was the longest serving monarch in the world.
- These countries are Australia, the Bahamas, Belize, Canada, Grenada, Papua New Guinea, Jamaica, New Zealand, St Christopher and Nevis, St Lucia, Tuvalu, Barbados, Antigua and Barbuda, and the Solomon Islands.

Bahrain

It is a constitutional hereditary monarchy since the 18th century which has been ruled by the House of Khalifa. It is a muslim country where the Shia sect is in majority. It is ruled by a Sunni Khalifa who is the chief of the state, however, the head of the government is the prime minister.

At present, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa is ruling the country.

Saudi Arabia

It is an Islam-based monarchy. Here the king heads the government and is the commander in chief of the military. A crown prince is appointed by the king to aid him with duties.

King Abdulaziz Al-Saud established the current form of the modern kingdom in 1932. After he died in 1953, his sons ruled the country. King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud is the ruler since January 2015.

Thailand

It is referred to as the constitutional monarchy or monarch of the Kingdom of Thailand. It was earlier known as Siam. Here, the king heads the state and the ruling Royal House of Chakri.

At present, the only heir of King Bhumibol Adulyadej and Queen Sirikit, Vajiralongkorn is the king. He was made crown prince in 1972 at the age of 20.

Malaysia

The Malaysian monarchy is unique because it has 9 Malay royal hereditary ethnic rulers who establish the Conference of Rulers. Each of them is ruling a separate state in the country—Negeri Sembilan, Pahang, Johore, Kelantan, Selangor, Terengganu, Perlis, Perak, and Kedah.

Seven kings use the title 'Sultan'. Negeri Sembilan king uses 'Yang di-Pertuan Besar' and Perlis' King uses 'Raja' as their respective titles.

Since 1957, when colonial rule ended, the king is elected every five years by the 9 rulers. At present, Sultan Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah is the king since 2019.

Other than these, Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain, Cambodia, etc, are also monarchies.

List of monarchies

Below is a list of all the monarchies and their form of government with an existing ruler.

1. Andora—Co-prince—Prince Emmanuel Macron and Archbishop Joan Enric Vives Sicília
2. Antigua and Barbuda—King/Queen—Charles III
3. Australia—King/Queen—Charles III
4. The Bahamas—King/Queen—Charles III
5. Bahrain—King/Queen—King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa
6. Belgium—King/Queen—Philippe or Filip
7. Belize—King/Queen—Charles III
8. Bhutan—King/Queen—Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck
9. Cambodia—King/Queen—Norodom Sihamoni
10. Canada—King/Queen—Charles III
11. Denmark—King/Queen—Margrethe II
12. Eswatini—King/Queen—King Mswati III
13. Grenada—King/Queen—Charles III
14. Jamaica—King/Queen—Charles III
15. Japan—Emperor—Naruhito
16. Jordan—King/Queen—Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein
17. Kuwait—Emir—Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah
18. Lesotho—King/Queen—Letsie III
19. Liechtenstein—Sovereign Prince—Prince Hans-Adam II
20. Luxembourg—Grand duke—Henri
21. Malaysia—Yang di-Pertuan Agong/Raja—Sultan Abdullah of Pahang
22. Monaco—Sovereign Prince—Sovereign Prince Albert II
23. Morocco—King/Queen—Mohammed VI
24. The Netherlands—King/Queen—Willem-Alexander
25. New Zealand—King/Queen—Charles III
26. Norway—King/Queen—Herald V
27. Oman—Sultan—Haitham bin Tariq Al Said
28. Papua New Guinea—King/Queen—Charles III
29. Qatar—Emir—Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani
30. Saint Kitts and Nevis—King/Queen—Charles III
31. Saint Lucia—King/Queen—Charles III
32. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines—King/Queen—Charles III
33. Saudi Arabia—King/Queen—Mohammed bin Salman Al Saud
34. Solomon Islands—King/Queen—Charles III
35. Spain—King/Queen—Felipe VI
36. Sweden—King/Queen—Carl XVI Gustaf
37. Thailand—King/Queen—Maha Vajiralongkorn

38. Tonga—King/Queen—Tupou VI
39. Tuvalu—King/Queen—Charles III
40. United Arab Emirates—President/ruler—Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum
41. United Kingdom—King/Queen—Charles III
42. Vatican City—Pope —Pope Francis

Note: Verified from various sources. Monarchies under Charles III may change as it depends on the consensus of the leaders of the country after the death of Elizabeth II.