

POWERS OF UK MONARCHY

AFP, London

The British monarch is mainly a ceremonial figurehead and is generally expected not to intervene in political matters. But as head of state, they have retained some constitutional powers.

ROLE IN PARLIAMENT

Parliament is the highest legislative authority in the United Kingdom and comprises the House of Commons, House of Lords and the Crown — another word for the monarchy. The Crown is the oldest part of Britain's system of government, but its powers have withered away over time, and are now broadly ritualistic.

APPOINTING A GOVT

The day after a general election, the monarch invites the leader of the party that won the most seats in the House of Commons to become prime minister and form a government.

OPENING AND DISSOLVING PARLIAMENT

The monarch opens parliament every year at the tradition-heavy State Opening, and reads out the government's plans for the next 12 months. The Crown also formally dissolves parliament before a general election.

ROYAL ASSENT

After a bill has been approved by the House of Commons and the House of Lords, it is sent to the monarch to approve and turn into a law. Although the monarch could technically refuse, the practice is, in reality, a rubber-stamping exercise. The most recent monarch to refuse assent was Queen Anne, in 1708.

PRIME MINISTERIAL CONFIDANT

Queen Elizabeth II held weekly meetings with all of her prime ministers, in which they would tell her of their plans and concerns. "They tell me what is going on or if they have any problems, and sometimes I can help in some way as well," she said in a 1992 documentary. "They know I can be impartial and it is rather nice to feel one is a sponge."

CREATING LORDS AND KNIGHTS

The monarch has the power to appoint lords to sit in parliament, but this is only exercised on the advice of government ministers. The monarch also personally confers knighthoods, which are given to those who have made a notable contribution to British society, in any walk of life.

CONSTITUTIONAL CRISES

The monarch is allowed to exercise their prerogative powers "in grave constitutional crisis" when they are permitted to go against ministerial advice, although it has never happened in modern times.

HEAD OF CHURCH

As supreme governor of the Church of England, Britain's monarch has the power to appoint bishops and archbishops, but again this is exercised only on the advice of a Church Commission.



People gather as Britain's King Charles III is driven back to Buckingham Palace in London yesterday, after being proclaimed as the new King. The proclamation comes a day after he vowed in his first speech to mourning subjects that he would emulate his "darling mama", Queen Elizabeth II who died on September 8.

PHOTO: AFP

The queen's last hours

AFP, London

It began with a short but worrying statement. Less than 48 hours after a frail but smiling Queen Elizabeth II was photographed appointing new Prime Minister Liz Truss, her doctors said they were "concerned". An unprecedented medical bulletin issued by Buckingham Palace said the 96-year-old queen was under "medical supervision" but "remained comfortable" at her Scottish retreat, Balmoral Castle.

The announcement at 12:32 pm (11:32 GMT) sent shockwaves through parliament, where MPs had gathered to hear Truss announce a two-year freeze on energy bills.

Within minutes, the office of heir to the throne Prince Charles had announced that he and his wife Camilla, who were already staying on the Balmoral estate, had arrived at Balmoral Castle.

It is believed the queen's daughter, Princess Anne, also made it to Balmoral in time as she too was in Scotland.

Both are thought to have been by the queen's side when she died on Thursday afternoon.

Other members of the family, however, faced a long and ultimately unsuccessful dash from London.

The second in line to the throne, Prince William; the queen's other two sons, Princes Andrew and Edward; and Edwards' wife Sophie, who was particularly close to the monarch; arrived in a cold, grey Aberdeen aboard a special RAF plane late in the afternoon.

William, who has now become the heir, then took the wheel of the car for the 80-kilometre (50-

mile) drive to Balmoral. But by the time the grim faced royals swept through the gate of Balmoral just after 5:00 pm, it was already too late.

Around half an hour earlier, at 4:30 pm, the prime minister had been informed the queen had died that afternoon.

Prince Harry, Charles' second son, meanwhile was still en route from London.



Initial announcements by the couple's spokesperson said both he and his wife Meghan would travel to Balmoral. In the end Harry made the journey alone and was still in the air when the official palace announcement was made to the world at 6:30 pm.

He did not arrive at Balmoral until much later.

BBC royal correspondent Nicholas Witchell speculated live on air that Meghan — who

has made a string of damaging criticisms of the royal family — did not make the journey in the end, for fear "she might not be terribly warmly welcomed".

The palace statement said the queen had died "peacefully" but in line with royal tradition did not give any cause of death.

Sources told the Daily Mail newspaper there had been "no chronic condition".

The queen had been undertaking far less work in recent months, but on Tuesday she nevertheless met both the outgoing Prime Minister Boris Johnson and the incoming Liz Truss.

The sources told the daily the queen had been in good spirits — despite her recent and well-documented "mobility issues" — but took a sudden turn for the worse during the night of Wednesday to Thursday.

William, Kate named Prince, Princess of Wales

REUTERS, London

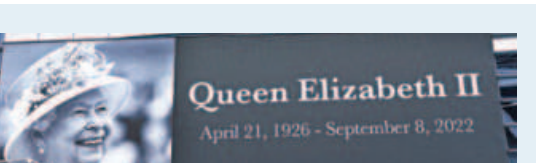
Britain's King Charles on Friday bestowed on his eldest son William and daughter-in-law Kate the titles of Prince and Princess of Wales, which he and his late wife Diana previously held.

A royal source said Kate appreciated the history associated with the title but would seek to create her own path as Princess of Wales.

Delivering his first speech to the nation since the death of his mother Queen Elizabeth on Thursday, Charles said he was proud to make his heir William the Prince of Wales, a title Charles had held since 1958.

"With Catherine (Kate) beside him, our new Prince and Princess of Wales will, I know, continue to inspire and lead our national conversations, helping to bring the marginal to the centre ground where vital help can be given," he said.

William and Kate, both 40, have taken on central roles within the royal family in recent years, appearing regularly in public and increasingly taking their three young children to events such as the queen's Platinum Jubilee earlier this year.



What happens next?

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 11

The queen's coffin is expected to be transported from Balmoral to the Palace of Holyroodhouse, her official Scottish residence in Edinburgh. The journey by road will pass through many small towns and villages, giving members of the public their first chance to pay respects.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

Charles is expected to begin a tour of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the four nations of the United Kingdom.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

The coffin is expected to be flown to the capital and transported by road to Buckingham Palace in London. Members of the public will likely line the route.

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

A ceremonial procession of the coffin through London is expected followed by a lying in state in parliament's Westminster Hall.

SEPTEMBER 15-17

Days 6, 7 and 8: Lying in state. Public can pay their respects, filing past the coffin on its catafalque.

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

A reception to be held for visiting dignitaries and heads of state who have arrived for the funeral.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

The state funeral is expected to take place in Westminster Abbey. Afterwards, the queen's coffin will be taken to Windsor Castle for a televised committal service at St George's Chapel. She will then be interred privately at the King George VI memorial chapel, alongside her husband.

N Korea law makes nuke programme 'irreversible'

AFP, Seoul

North Korea has passed a law declaring its readiness to launch preventive nuclear strikes, including in the face of conventional attacks, state media said.

The move effectively eliminates the possibility of denuclearisation talks, with leader Kim Jong Un saying the country's status as a nuclear state was now "irreversible".

The announcement comes at a time of heightened tension between North and South, with Pyongyang blaming Seoul for the outbreak of Covid-19 in its territory and conducting a record number of weapons tests this year.

The newly enacted law says North Korea can carry out a preventive nuclear strike "automatically" and "immediately to destroy the hostile forces" when a foreign country poses an imminent threat, the official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) said.

The law specifically states the North can use nuclear weapons "in case of a nuclear or non-nuclear attack by hostile forces on the state leadership and the command organization of the state's nuclear forces", among other situations, according to state media.

"The status of our country as a nuclear weapons state has become irreversible", Kim said, KCNA reported.

The law "publicly justifies Pyongyang's use of its nuclear power" in the event of any military clash, Cheong Seong-chang of the Center for North Korea Studies at the Sejong Institute told AFP.

As the North's dictator, "Kim Jong Un does not need laws to launch a nuclear strike", but the new law serves as a way to "vindicate Kim's use of nuclear weapons in case of emergency by disclosing the principles of nuclear use at home and abroad in advance," he added.



Allow Rohingyas to work

FROM PAGE 1

Private companies should be allowed to hire Rohingya refugees under special arrangements.

"Japan supports the relocation policy to Bhashan Char to alleviate the harsh conditions in the Cox's camps. However, I felt that we need to build a more sustainable framework on the island. There is a lack of facilities and refugees are frustrated by the lack of employment opportunities."

Further funding will help, he said, adding that Japan is ready to cooperate for early repatriation of the Rohingyas.

"But the task is challenging because of the situation on the other side of the border," Naoki added.

Canada has been persuading ASEAN countries to speak out against the atrocities perpetrated by Myanmar, said Lily Nicholls, its high commissioner in Bangladesh.

"This is a regional and a global crisis and so will not see a swift solution. There are superpowers who are allies of Myanmar. The Rohingyas are not able to return at the moment. It is important not to exploit that for political

reasons."

Canada has imposed some of the strongest sanctions on Myanmar and halted arms sales and financial aid, Nicholls added.

The conditions in Myanmar do not allow for a safe return of the Rohingyas, said Arturo Hines, the political section chief at the US embassy in Dhaka.

"Things have gotten worse. Almost every day they persecute their own people, their minorities. This shows no sign of ending and yet some countries continue to give them arms and technical assistance."

Until this is addressed, the door remains shut for the Rohingyas. Subsequently, there is a need to transition from an emergency response to a more sustainable response, Hines added.

Malaysian High Commissioner Haznah Md Hashim pressed the need for proactive action to bring the crisis to a solution. "We are currently hosting 200,000 Rohingya refugees too although it is not a lot compared to Bangladesh," Hashim added.

There has been no genuine effort from the neighbouring states in repatriating the Rohingyas as early as possible,

said Home Minister

Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

"Bangladesh has been practising political patience and the armed forces are showing maximum patience even during instances of clear violation of international law. We continue to witness mortars and shells falling into our territory," he added.

Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen echoed the same.

"The ongoing armed conflict is an internal matter of Myanmar. This conflict is not a bilateral issue — this is completely created by Myanmar."

There is a large-scale military movement within close proximity of the border without notification of the border guards.

"We are deeply concerned. If the situation aggravates in Myanmar, more people will attempt to enter Bangladesh — this will be foiled by our border guards."

The situation in the camps is becoming untenable too, Momen said. "They are undertaking unlawful ventures — these destitute people are being used for the smuggling of arms and drugs."

The international efforts to re-establish democracy

in Myanmar cannot leave the Rohingyas out of the equation.

"Peace and stability in Myanmar are not possible without the Rohingyas."

The targeted sanctions on a few people will not work for Myanmar, and the world must take a tougher stance.

"International justice and accountability will be critical for a sustainable solution. We are against impunity," Momen added.

Despite economic constraints Bangladesh has given shelter to the Rohingya refugees, said Nurul Islam, president of the London-based Arakan Rohingya National Organisation.

"On the other hand, the international community is not taking as much of an interest in the issue. The international community is failing again and again," he added.

Professor Ky Thyng Aung, a representative of the Rakhine Community from Cox's Bazar, spoke about how Rakhines were historically driven into Bangladesh by ethnic cleansing.

Rakhines have also gone through periods of persecution. As many as

8 million people had been killed during 18 and 19th century and so they had to migrate to Bangladesh.

"Myanmar has an issue with minorities," he said, adding that because of historical events dating back to the second World War, there are tensions between the Rohingyas and the Rakhine Buddhists.

Rohingyas need to be supported with adequate socio-economic support so that they do not spread out all over the country, said Sabbir Ahmed, a former army chief.

No nation can trust the Myanmar regime, said Mohammad Mozahidul Islam, a professor at Jahangirnagar University's history department.

"Myanmar is in a precarious position regarding whether it will break out into war or not. So any hopes of repatriation are a distant prospect," said Richard Horsey, senior advisor of the Myanmar International Crisis Group.

Andreas Indregard, former political advisor to Kofi Anan; Tasmia Persoob, Rasheda Akhtar and Shahab Enam Khan, all Jahangirnagar University professors, spoke among others.

NUCLEAR DEAL

European powers 'doubts' Iran's commitment

AFP, Berlin

European powers yesterday raised "serious doubts" over Iran's sincerity in seeking a nuclear agreement, warning that Tehran's position jeopardises prospects of restoring the 2015 accord.

European mediators last month appeared to make progress in restoring the 2015 accord as Iran largely agreed to a proposed final text.

But optimism dimmed when the United States sent a reply, to which Iran in turn responded.

In a joint statement yesterday, France, Germany and Britain said that the final package put to Tehran had taken the European powers "to the limit of their flexibility".

"Unfortunately, Iran has chosen not to seize this critical diplomatic opportunity, they said, assessing that "instead, Iran continues to escalate its nuclear programme way beyond any plausible civilian justification".

Tehran has also reopened issues related to its legally binding obligations under the Non Proliferation Treaty that was concluded with the UN atomic energy watchdog IAEA.

"This latest demand raises serious doubts as to Iran's intentions and commitment to a successful outcome on the JCPOA," France, Germany and Britain said.

The three European powers' statement came a day after US Secretary of State Antony Blinken assessed that Iran's latest reply on the nuclear deal is a step "backwards".

World paying 'horrific price' for fossil fuels folly: UN chief

AFP, Ustá Muhammad

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres yesterday said that developing nations were paying a "horrific price" for the world's reliance on fossil fuels, as he toured parts of Pakistan hit by floods blamed on climate change.

"Pakistan and other developing countries are paying a horrific price for the intransigence of big emitters that continue to bet on fossil fuels," Guterres said in a tweet, shortly before heading to see some of the most flood-affected areas.

Nearly 1,400 people have died in flooding that covers a third of the country and has wiped out crops and destroyed homes, businesses, roads and bridges.

Guterres hopes his visit will galvanise support for Pakistan, which has put the provisional cost of the catastrophe at more than \$30 billion.