

Queen Victoria

The British monarch that reigned for 66 years

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It is no exaggeration to say that being a Head of State is a great achievement for a person in their life. Moreover, becoming a Head of State and holding that position for a long period of time is also a huge challenge.

In this context, what a great achievement it is to be a Head of State not only in one country, but in many countries for decades?

Such is the story of Empress Victoria Alexandrina, who governed Great Britain, the most powerful State in the world in the 19th century. She ascended the throne at the age of 19 and was the Queen of Great Britain and many other countries including Sri Lanka, for 63 years and seven months.

Diamond jubilee

She was also able to celebrate the 60th anniversary of her accession to the throne, a diamond jubilee.

Princess Victoria was born on May 24, 1819. After the death of King William IV, on June 20, 1837, she became Queen of Britain and all other States under the British Empire.

From then until her death on January 22, 1901, she served as the Queen for 63 years and seven months. The reign of Queen Victoria is considered special as there were many religious, social and political changes in Great Britain as well as in the other countries that were under the British Empire.

Negative changes

In addition, during her reign



there were many positive and negative changes in the fields of law, art, literature and innovation.

On September 23, 1896, Queen Victoria overtook King George III, then the longest reigning monarch in British history. The British royal family and Parliament suggested that a program be organised to commemorate it, but Queen Victoria rejected the proposal. She said it was best to postpone the celebrations until June 1897, the 60th anniversary of her accession to the throne.

Joseph Chamberlain, then Colonial Secretary, suggested that a grand celebration be arranged to

commemorate both the Queen's transcendence of King George III and her Diamond Jubilee. He was also tasked with compiling a list of foreign guests to be invited to the celebration.

Heads of State

He suggested to the Queen that only the Heads of State and representatives of the countries then under the British Empire should be invited. The proposal was approved by her.

The Diamond Jubilee celebrations began on June 20, 1897, at

Windsor Castle. She first attended a service to thank her royal ancestors who had given her the throne. The next day she left for London to see the colourful streets.

It is also said that people in houses on both sides of the road where she was traveling, threw various flowers towards the chariot in which the Queen was traveling.

That night she also attended a banquet at Buckingham Palace, which was also attended by the Duke of France, Ferdinand. As the Queen was due to attend a service at St. Paul's Cathedral the next day, many fell asleep in the streets in anticipa-



said to have sent a telegram to all the countries under her control which read: "I thank the people of my empire from the bottom of my heart, and God will protect them,"

St. Paul's Cathedral

The Queen rode in a chariot carrying eight cream-coloured horses and set out for St. Paul's Cathedral. Although the ceremony was full of festivities, she wore a black dress to commemorate her then-deceased husband, Prince Albert, and their two children.

It was attended by representatives of all the colonies and was organised in such a way that it passed through almost all the most important places in London, such as Trafalgar Square, London Bridge and the Big Ben Clock. Crowds gathered on both sides of the road, singing the country's national anthem "God Save the Queen" and the Queen burst into tears on several occasions.

The service was organised outside St. Paul's Cathedral, as it was difficult for Queen Victoria, who was suffering from arthritis at the time, to climb the steps of the Church.

Large crowds were watching from the rooftops of the surrounding buildings, and it was said that there was no place for even the Church's choir to stay.

The Queen stayed under a makeshift tent and attended the 20-minute service. Following the service, the Queen took to the streets of London. That evening she returned to Buckingham Palace for lunch. Crowds had gathered on both sides of the road until about 2.30 a.m. to greet the Queen, chanting hymns and singing songs.

tion of the procession.

On June 22, the third day of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, was declared a public holiday. Tens of thousands of people flocked to London that day to watch the royal procession.

The shops were full of national flags, tableware and other souvenirs made for the Diamond Jubilee celebrations. Thousands of guards were deployed on both sides of the road.

Before leaving the Buckingham Palace with a convoy of 17 chariots carrying members of the royal family and leaders of States under the British Empire, Queen Victoria is