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## Arab World's Longest-Serving Ruler Passes Away

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### Why in News

Oman's Sultan Qaboos bin Said Al Said, the Arab world's longest-serving ruler, has died.

- In 1970, with the help of British, Qaboos overthrew his father in a bloodless coup, emerging as the Sultan at age 29.
- He ruled Oman for almost half a century.
- His cousin **Haitham bin Tariq Al Said** has been sworn as his successor.



- Oman is the **oldest independent state in the Arab world**.
- It occupies the southeastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula at the confluence of the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea.
- **Geography**
  - Much of the country's **interior** falls within the desert of the **Rub'al-Khali**. The region is still the domain of **Bedouin** nomads.
  - Bedouins are Arabic-speaking nomadic peoples of the Middle Eastern deserts, especially of North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, Israel, Iraq, Syria, and Jordan.

- **Polity**
  - Oman is governed by a monarchy (**sultanate**) with two **advisory bodies**.
  - The sultan is Oman's **paramount decision-maker**, and also holds the positions of the **prime minister**, supreme commander of the armed forces, minister of defence, finance and foreign affairs.
  - Oman also recognizes the **right to different forms of worship**.
- **As an independent mediator**
  - Oman was able to facilitate secret talks between the **United States** and **Iran** in 2013 that led to the landmark **nuclear deal** in 2015.
  - Oman was the only Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) country **not** to join a Saudi-led military coalition against Iran-backed Shiite **Houthi rebels** in Yemen.
- **India- Oman relations**
  - Oman is a **strategic partner** of India in the Gulf and an **important interlocutor** at the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Arab League and Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA) fora. Oman also accords a high priority to its ties with India.
  - The two countries across the Arabian Sea are linked by geography, history and culture and have **cordial relations**.
  - These relations are attributed to **historical maritime trade** linkage and the seminal **role played by the Indian expatriate community in the building of Oman**. There are about **8 lakh Indians in Oman**.
- **India is among Oman's top trading partners.**
  - For Oman, India was the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest source of its **imports** and 3rd largest **market** for its non-oil exports in 2018.
  - **Indian firms have invested heavily in Oman** in various sectors like iron and steel, cement, fertilizers, textiles, chemicals, automotive, etc.

**Source: IE**