e-OCI Card

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Why in News?

Recently, Union Home Minister launched the Electronic Overseas Citizen of India (e-OCI) card.

Overseas Citizen of India (OCI)

- **OCI –** It is an immigration status that ***grants foreign nationals of Indian origin*** the right to live, work, and study in India indefinitely.
- But it does not grant actual Indian citizenship, voting rights, or the ability to hold constitutional office.
- **Eligibility –** Persons of Indian origin who were citizens of India on/after 26 Jan 1950, or eligible then.
- **Launched in –** 2005 via amendment to the Citizenship Act, 1955.

India prohibits dual citizenship, to accommodate people of Indian origin holding foreign passports, the government introduced the OCI scheme, governed by Ministry of Home Affairs.

- **Visa Benefit –** Provides lifelong visa for entry and stay in India.
- **Exemption –** OCIs are exempt from police reporting.
- **Privileges –** Enjoy benefits similar to NRIs in financial, economic, and educational fields (except owning agricultural/plantation property).
- **Exclusion –** Individuals with ancestry linked to Pakistan or Bangladesh are not eligible.

Features of e-OCI Card

- **Fully Digital Process –** Complete the entire process online (Application, document upload, approval, and card download).
- **No Re-issuance Needed –** OCI booklet re-issuance after age 20

eliminated, only passport details need to be updated online.

- **Convenience –** Anytime access via mobile devices, helps for faster immigration clearance.
- **Security –** Real-time verification at airports, hence reduced fraud.
- **Efficiency –** Cuts paperwork, administrative costs, strengthens data management.
- **Existing Cardholders –** Can obtain e-OCI digitally without fresh application or physical verification.

Reference

The Hindu | E-OCI

