New OCI Portal & OCI Scheme

***Prelims**: Indian Polity and Governance | Public Policy & Rights Issues | Current events of national and international importance*

Why in news?

Recently, India has launched the new OCI Portal with an updated user interface to simplify the registration process for overseas citizens.

- **Existing OCI Services portal** – It was *developed in 2013.*
- It is currently operational in over 180 Indian missions as well as 12 Foreigners Regional Registration Offices (FRROs), processing approximately 2,000 applications per day.
- **New OCI portal** – https://ociservices.gov.in/
- It aims to address existing limitations and enhance user experience.
- It will provide *enhanced functionality, advanced security, and a user-friendly experience*.
- It covers more than ***5 million OCI cardholders*** and new users.
- It can ensure that Indian-origin residents face no inconvenience when visiting or staying in India.

OCI scheme

- It was introduced through an amendment to the Citizenship Act, 1955, in 2005.
- **Aim** – To provide for the *registration of Persons of Indian Origin as Overseas Citizens of India.*
- **Eligibility for a foreign national**
  - Who was a citizen of India at the time of, or at any time after 26th January, 1950; or
  - Who was eligible to become a citizen of India on 26th January, 1950; or
  - Who belonged to a territory that became part of India after 15th August, 1947; or
  - Who is a child or a grandchild or a great grandchild of such a citizen; or
  - Who is a minor child of such persons mentioned above; or
  - Who is a minor child and whose both parents are citizens of India or one of the parents is a citizen of India
- **Eligibility for spouse** - Spouse of foreign origin of a citizen of India or spouse of foreign origin of an OCI Cardholder and whose marriage has been registered and subsisted for a continuous period of *not less than 2 years* immediately preceding the presentation of the application.
- **Non-eligible** – Individuals who *are or had been citizens of Pakistan or Bangladesh,* or whose parent or grandparent or great grandparent are or had been citizens of those 2

countries.
- Foreign nationals cannot apply for OCI in India while on Tourist Visa, Missionary Visa and Mountaineering Visa.

*Moreover, the foreigner has to be ordinarily resident of India to be eligible to apply for OCI registration in India. '**Ordinarily resident**' will mean a person staying in a particular country or in India for a continuous period of 6 months.*

References

1. The Hindu| Lauch of New OCI Portal
2. OCIServices| Overseas Citizens of India

