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Global Immigration alert

July 2026

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India

India launches digital OCI card

Executive summary

On 30 June 2026, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) launched the digital Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card. The new system is designed to address challenges associated with the previous paper-based OCI system and enhance convenience for more than five million existing OCI cardholders.

Key developments

The Union Home Minister launched a fully digital, citizen-centric initiative aimed at streamlining OCI services for the global Indian diaspora. Key changes include:

- Previously, OCI cardholders who received their OCI card before turning age 20 had to apply for a new OCI card when they obtained a new passport after turning age 20. Under the new system, each digital OCI card will have a unique identity and will no longer need to be re-issued when a new passport is obtained after the age of 20. Cardholders, however, must update their passport details in the system each time a new passport is issued.
- The entire OCI card application process can now be completed online, including application submission, document uploads and download of cards.
- The digital card is accessible at any time through mobile devices, and reduces application processing times and enables quicker immigration clearance at ports of entry. It also eliminates the need to carry a physical OCI card, reducing the risk of loss or damage.
- Existing OCI cardholders can obtain the digital card online, without filing a fresh application or physical verification.
- The system is expected to reduce paperwork, lower administrative costs, and minimize the risk of fraud and strengthen data management and security.

Impact on employers

Employers may stay updated with the latest developments, update their internal processes and proactively inform impacted employees as required.

Key steps

EY will continue to monitor these developments. Should you have any questions, we encourage you to contact one of our immigration professionals.

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