Aircraft (Amendment) Bill 2020

Why in news?

Rajya Sabha has passed the Aircraft (Amendment) Bill 2020.

What does the amendment seek to do?

- The bill will amend the **Aircraft Act of 1934**.
- It seeks to provide statutory status to the
    1. Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA),
    2. Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS), and
    3. Aircraft Accidents Investigation Bureau (AAIB).
- It seeks to expand the role of the two regulators, DGCA and BCAS.

What will change when this Bill becomes law?

- The DGCA will be empowered to impose penalties for certain violations.
- It will increase the maximum penalty limit to Rs 1 crore from the existing Rs 10 lakh.
- It will allow the Ministry of Civil Aviation to review any order passed by the Director General of Civil Aviation and the Director General of Civil Aviation Security.
- The Ministry can direct them to rescind or modify such order.

Why are these amendments being made to the Aircraft Act?

- The Aircraft Act of 1934 was enacted to control the manufacture, possession, use, operation, sale, import and export of aircraft.
- It secures the safety of aircraft operations in India.
- It makes provisions for carrying out civil aviation operations as per standards, procedures and practices laid down by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO).
- From time to time, the government has made amendments to the Act to meet the evolving global and Indian aviation scenario.
- The various changes that needed to be made necessitated amendments to the Aircraft Act.

What was the trigger for these changes now?

- India, as a signatory, is subjected to **audits** by ICAO and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).
- The audits conducted by the ICAO in 2012 and 2015 indicated a need to amend the Aircraft Act,
    1. To give proper recognition to the regulators under the Act,
    2. To enhance the maximum quantum of fines,
    3. To empower the departmental officers to impose financial penalties on individuals or organisations involved in violations of the legal provisions and
    4. To include certain areas of air navigation services for rulemaking purposes under Section 5 of the Act.
- These are the triggers for proposal to amend the Aircraft Act of 1934.

How are the audits conducted?

- **ICAO** - The ICAO regularly conducts safety and security audits of all countries which are signatory to the Chicago Convention.
- These audits are done to ensure these countries are carrying out their safety and security oversight functions.
- These audits are conducted under its Universal Safety Oversight Audit Programme and the Universal Security Audit Programme.
- **FAA** - The FAA of the US also conducts safety audits of countries whose airlines operate to the US.
- These audits are conducted under its International Aviation Safety Assessment Programme.

Source: The Indian Express

Quick Fact

International Civil Aviation Organization

- It was created after the Chicago convention on International Civil Aviation.
- It became a specialized agency of the United Nations linked to Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC).
- Secretariat - Montreal, Canada.
- It sets standards and regulations necessary for aviation safety, security, efficiency as well as for aviation environmental protection.



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