US Restriction on Indian Evacuations

Why in news?

The United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) has restricted repatriation flights being operated by Air India.

What does the restriction mean?

- The restriction does not place any limitations on US-India charter operations.
- Air India remains free to conduct the full complement of passenger charter services.
- But, Air India will now need specific authorisation i.e prior approval from the DOT to conduct evacuation services.

Why did they restrict?

- The USDOT accused that India has impaired the operating rights of the US carriers.
- It also said that India has engaged in discriminatory and restrictive practices with respect to the US carrier services to and from India.
- It added that Air India's repatriation flights involved sales to any member of the general public able to enter the US.
- An official from the US DOT had advised Air India that some of its evacuation charters have gone beyond true evacuations.
- However, the Order said that the Indian government has thus far failed to remedy the situation.

What are the freedoms of air as per ICAO?

- The freedoms of air in civil aviation pertain to a set of rights accorded to a country's airlines to enter or land in another country's airspace or airports.
- According to the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO), there are nine freedoms of the air.
- These rights generally operate on a bilaterally reciprocal basis.
- However, in certain cases, some handicaps are imposed on capacity allowed from one country to another.
- The US government has called for restrictions on the third and fourth freedoms for India.
- These freedoms essentially allow basic international service between two

countries.

Source: The Indian Express

