

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.

3. SOCIAL JUSTICE

3.1 Women as PC Officers

What is the issue?

- This year shall be remembered as a landmark in Indian military history.
- Women officers were allowed to serve as permanently commissioned (PC) officers.

What is the story behind?

- The Supreme Court of India has allowed women to serve as PC officers in 10 combat support arms and services of the Indian Army.
- It directed the central Government to rescind the embargo on command appointments for women officers.
- The government issued a formal sanction offering PC to women officers of the Indian Army.
- This is the culmination of a struggle for equal opportunity that began almost 27 years ago.

What does a grant of PC mean?

- A grant of PC will accrue many other employee benefits, as,