Bureau of Civil Aviation Security and India's Aviation Sector

Why in News?

The **Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS)**, under the **Ministry of Civil Aviation,** has cancelled the license of **Celebi Aviation**, a **Turkish airport ground-handling firm** operating at major Indian airports citing **'national security concerns'.**

- The move followed **Turkey's support for Pakistan** after India's **Operation Sindoor**, launched in response to the **Pahalgam terror attack**.

Legal Framework for Civil Aviation License

- Under the **Aircraft Rules, 1937** (framed under the **Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024)**, **Rule 92** mandates **government clearance for ground-handling agencies**.
- Under **Aircraft Security Rules, 2022 (Rules 11 & 12),** the **Director General, BCAS can suspend or cancel this clearance for non-compliance or national security concerns.**

What is the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS)?

- **About: BCAS** is the **national regulator for civil aviation security** in India headquartered at Delhi and headed by an officer of the rank of **Director General of Police**.
- **Established**: It was originally established as a cell within the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA** in **January 1978,** following the recommendations of the **Pande Committee,** and was later reorganized as an **independent department under the Ministry of Civil Aviation in 1987.**
  - The **DGCA regulates air transport services** to, from, and within India. It also **enforces civil air regulations, air safety,** and airworthiness standards.
- **Key Functions:** It sets aviation security standards aligned with **Annex 17 to the Chicago Convention of International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO),** oversees implementation and training, and conducts surprise checks and mock drills to ensure preparedness and vigilance at airports.

What is the ICAO & Chicago Convention?

- The **International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)** is a specialized UN agency established by the **Chicago Convention in 1944** to regulate global civil aviation.
- It sets international standards and procedures for the **safe, secure, efficient, and environmentally sustainable** development of air transport.
- The Convention defines rules on **airspace sovereignty, aircraft registration, safety**, and grants **5 core air freedoms** (later expanded to 9) for international flights.
- It also provides for **tax exemptions on aviation fuel**.
- ICAO is headquartered in **Montreal, Canada**, with **India as one of its 193 member states**.

What are the Key Initiatives Related to the Aviation Industry?

- **National Civil Aviation Policy 2016**
- **Regional Connectivity Scheme-Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN)**
- **FDI Policy: 100% Foreign Direct Investment(FDI)** is allowed in aviation sectors like air transport and Maintenance, Repair, and Overhaul (MRO).
- **Infrastructure Modernization: Digi Yatra** and **NABH Nirman** to enhance operational efficiency and passenger experience.
- **Sustainability Efforts:** Airports like Delhi and Mumbai achieved **Level 4+ Carbon Accreditation** and 73 airports fully use **green energy,** with **solar energy**, and new greenfield airports prioritize **net-zero emissions.**

What is the State of India's Aviation Sector?

- India is the **3rd-largest domestic aviation market** after the US and China, accounting for **69% of South Asia's airline traffic**, and is projected to become the **3rd-largest air passenger market globally by 2030**.
- As of **FY25 (till Sept 2024)**, total passenger traffic stood at **196.91 million**. The sector directly employs **369,700 people**, contributing **USD 5.6 billion**, and supports **7.7 million jobs** and **USD 53.6 billion** (1.5% of GDP) including tourism-linked sectors.
- The number of **operational airports rose from 74 (2014) to 157 (2024)**, with a target of **350-400 by 2047**.

Read More: International Civil Aviation Organisation, Bharatiya Vayuyan Vidheyak Bill 2024, In-Flight Unruly Behaviour of Passengers.