

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO : 649
(TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 10th February 2025)

**AFFORDABILITY AND ACCESSIBILITY OF AIR TRAVEL IN THE
COUNTRY**

649. SHRI JOSE K. MANI

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:-

- (a) the steps being taken by Government to ensure the affordability and accessibility of air travel in the country;
- (b) the manner in which the UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) scheme progressed in improving regional connectivity across the country;
- (c) whether there are plans to introduce additional measures to make air travel more affordable for the middle class and lower-income groups; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION

(Shri Murlidhar Mohol)

(a) to (d): Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched Regional Connectivity Scheme - UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) on 21-10-2016 to stimulate regional air connectivity from unserved and underserved airports for the expansion of air services in small cities and remote areas in the country by making air travel affordable to the masses. Five rounds of bidding under the RCS-UDAN scheme have been completed and 619 RCS routes connecting 88 unserved and underserved airports (including 13 heliports and 2 water aerodromes) have been operationalised across the country till date. To ensure the affordability of regional air travel, the UDAN scheme provides financial incentives to airline operators on regional routes that include: Concessions by the Central Government, State Governments/ Union Territories and airport operators to reduce airline operation costs and also the Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to bridge the gap between operational costs and expected revenues on such routes. The airfare on the RCS seats on which VGF is provided to the Selected Airline Operators (SAOs) is capped. The above measures aim to strengthen affordability, accessibility and overall passenger convenience in the aviation sector, thereby promoting regional development and economic growth.

Also, the Government has issued 'Guidelines for Seaplane Operations in India' to

provide seamless and safe seaplane operations while enabling the citizens in remote areas to benefit from air connectivity under the RCS-UDAN scheme. The government has also announced launching of a modified UDAN Scheme for the next 10 years aimed at connecting 120 new destinations.
