

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
RAJYA SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO : 10
(TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 21st July 2025)**

**ROLE OF UDAN FOR AFFORDABLE AIR TRAVEL AND BALANCED
REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY**

***10. SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA**

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

- (a) the role of the UDAN Scheme in providing affordable air travel and promoting balanced regional development;
- (b) the new routes launched under the scheme and whether Government plans to add new destinations under the Scheme;
- (c) whether Government plans to prioritise connecting remote, hilly, and aspirational districts including the North Easter Region; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

MINISTER OF CIVIL AVIATION

(Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu)

(a) to (d) : A statement is laid on the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (D) IN RESPECT OF RAJYA SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.10 FOR REPLY ON 21.07.2025 REGARDING "ROLE OF UDAN FOR AFFORDABLE AIR TRAVEL AND BALANCED REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY" BY SHRI BHUBANESWAR KALITA

(a) to (b) The Ministry of Civil Aviation launched the Regional Connectivity Scheme-Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN) on October 21, 2016, with the objective of enhancing regional air connectivity and making air travel more affordable for the general public and promoting regional development.

The Scheme ensures affordability as the airfares on the seats on which VGF is provided are capped at affordable rates, as determined by the government. The Scheme also 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 to make air travel affordable under the scheme.

Since the commencement of the scheme, 637 RCS routes have been operationalised, connecting 92 unserved and underserved airports, including 15 heliports and 2 water aerodromes across the country. By bringing Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities onto the national aviation map, UDAN has significantly reduced travel time and improved accessibility for both residents, businesses and enhanced tourism.

The UDAN scheme has also driven significant infrastructure upgrades at existing airports and facilitated the development of new regional airports. This has not only improved overall transport logistics but also generated indirect employment opportunities.

(c) to (d) During five rounds of bidding, 90 RCS routes have been operationalised in North Eastern States connecting 12 airports/heliports of NER. In the State of Himachal Pradesh, 32 RCS routes have been operationalised connecting 4 airports/heliports in the state. In the State of Uttarakhand, 60 RCS routes have been operationalised connecting 13 airports/heliports in the state.

It has been announced in Budget 2024-25 that the government aims to increase regional connectivity to 120 new destinations and cater to 4 crore passengers in the next 10 years. To further enhance regional air connectivity, particularly for underserved and unserved areas, the scheme will also support helipads and smaller airports in hilly, aspirational, and North East Region districts.
