

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
RAJYA SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. : 1783
TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 9th March 2026
**REGIONAL AIR CONNECTIVITY AND OPERATIONAL
CHALLENGES**

1783. SMT GEETA ALIAS CHANDRAPRABHA

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

- (a) current status of the regional connectivity scheme (UDAN), including the number of routes operational, number of underserved airports connected and capacity utilisation during the last three years;
- (b) details of passenger traffic growth and aircraft movement data at tier-II and tier-III airports, including performance indicators such as on-time departures and cancellations;
- (c) specific operational challenges identified such as crew shortages, ground handling constraints and weather-related disruptions; and
- (d) measures taken to improve airport infrastructure, air traffic management and regional airline viability, and whether any review has been undertaken to recalibrate subsidies, airport charges or slot allocations to boost regional connectivity sustainability?

ANSWER

Minister of State in the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION (Shri Murlidhar Mohol)

(a): Under the Regional Connectivity Scheme-UDAN, as on 28.02.2026, 663 routes connecting 95 unserved and underserved airports (including 17 heliports and 2 water aerodromes) have been operationalised. Out of these, 200 routes and 23 airports (including 6 heliports) were operationalised in the last three years.

(b): The details of passengers handled and aircraft movements during the last three years at all airports including Tier II and III cities, and the growth rate during 2023-24 and 2024-25, are placed at Annexure.

(c) & (d): To identify operational challenges in ensuring flight regularity, the Government conducts periodic reviews with all stakeholders, including the airlines. The Government is increasingly adopting technologies like Special Visual Flight Rules (VFR), Instrument Flight Rules (IFR) and Required Navigation Performance (RNP) procedures to reduce weather and visibility-related disruptions. Further, as per the Ground Handling Services Regulations, 2018 and its subsequent amendments, all domestic scheduled airline operators and scheduled helicopter operators are permitted to undertake self-handling at all airports, including civil enclaves.

Modernisation and development of airport infrastructure is undertaken by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) or the respective airport operators based on traffic demand, commercial feasibility, and operational requirements.

To improve air traffic management and safety, measures such as Performance Based Navigation (PBN) procedures, Centralised Air Traffic Flow Management (ATFM), Flexible Use of Airspace (FUA), and regular recruitment of Air Traffic Controllers (ATCOs) have been undertaken.

The UDAN scheme provides partial Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to support airlines operating on unserved and underserved routes. Flight operations under the RCS are exempt from various airport charges and the VGF is periodically indexed to inflation.

Annexure

Aircraft Movement and Passenger Handled from 2022-23, 2023-24, and 2024-25 and Growth Rate at All Indian Airports During 2023-24 and 2024-25									
2022-2023		2023-2024		2024-2025		Growth rate in 2023-24 wrt 2022-23		Growth rate in 2024-25 wrt 2023-24	
Aircraft Movement (In Numbers)	Passenger (In Numbers)	Aircraft Movement (In Numbers)	Passenger (In Numbers)	Aircraft Movement (In Numbers)	Passenger (In Numbers)	Aircraft Movement	Passenger	Aircraft Movement	Passenger
2508315	327279136	2677629	376472107	2887053	411768947	7%	15%	8%	9%