

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION  
**RAJYA SABHA**  
**UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. : 194**

TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 2nd February 2026

**UDAN 5.5 SCHEME AND EXPANDING REGIONAL CONNECTIVITY**

194. SHRI AYODHYA RAMI REDDY ALLA

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

- (a) the manner in which Government can ensure the long-term sustainability of UDAN routes, given the challenges of low passenger demand and high operational costs;
- (b) whether innovative strategies can be employed to increase private sector participation in the development of regional airports and air connectivity;
- (c) the manner in which introduction of seaplanes and helicopters under UDAN 5.5 impact the tourism industry in remote and coastal regions; and
- (d) measures that can be taken to address the issue of non-operational airports under the UDAN scheme and the manner in which their utilization can be optimized?

**ANSWER**

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

(a) to (d): In order to improve long term sustainability under the UDAN Scheme, the following approach is adopted:

1. To leverage the expertise of the relevant State Government in their respective regions, they have been requested to identify and prioritize high-potential aerodromes that can be developed and operationalized.
2. Airlines have been asked to submit business plans for timely operationalization, prior to the award of the route.

The Implementing Agency has also been publishing the list of prioritized aerodromes that are ready or likely to be ready. Further, eligible routes that were discontinued in the past rounds due to various reasons are re-bid, awarded and operationalized in the subsequent rounds.

Airports and routes under the UDAN Scheme are reviewed regularly based on passenger load factors, airline interest, operational readiness, and financial sustainability.

The scheme promotes private sector participation through a transparent, market-based bidding process. Under the scheme document, unserved/underserved airports owned by AAI, State Governments, Public Sector Undertakings and Private entities are available for bidding. The development/revival/up-gradation of these airports is undertaken upon its identification through valid bid and award to the Selected Airline Operator (SAO) and flexible operational

models such as smaller aircraft, helicopters, and seaplanes are promoted to match regional demand.

The introduction of seaplanes and helicopters under UDAN 5.5 is expected to boost tourism in remote, hilly, island, and coastal regions by providing faster, point-to-point connectivity to tourist destinations, pilgrimage sites, and ecologically sensitive areas, while supporting local economies, employment, and allied services.

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