

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. : 3315
(To be answered on the 20th March 2025)**

EXPANSION OF AIR CONNECTIVITY

3315. SMT MAHIMA KUMARI MEWAR

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION

नागर विमानन मंत्री

be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether it is a fact that air connectivity in the country has improved considerably with setting up of new airports and the regional air connectivity scheme and if so, the details thereof;
- (b) whether the Government has conducted any impact assessment of enhanced air connectivity under UDAN scheme on the economic and tourism and if so, the details and the key findings thereof;
- (c) the steps being taken by the Government to further strengthen regional air connectivity across the country, particularly in Rajasthan;
- (d) whether the Government proposes to enhance financial incentives and infrastructure support for airlines operating under the UDAN scheme; and
- (e) if so, the details thereof?

ANSWER

Minister of State in the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री

(Shri Murlidhar Mohol)

(a) Under the Regional Connectivity Scheme -Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN), 625 RCS routes (including 53 Tourism RCS routes) connecting 88 unserved and underserved airports (including 13 heliports & 02 water aerodromes) have been operationalised. Total domestic passengers travelled through RCS-UDAN are more than 149 lakhs connecting on over 2.97 Lakh RCS flights till date. These developments mark significant milestones in enhancing regional connectivity.

(b) The following studies have been conducted on the RCS-UDAN Scheme that also cover air travel affordability:

1. The report "The Regional Connectivity Scheme UDAN - Progress and Prospects" by the Indian School of Business (ISB), (2021-22)

2.The mid-term appraisal for the Schemes "Evaluation Study of Regional Connectivity Scheme" by DMEO NITI Aayog (2023-24)

UDAN has been successful in enhancing regional and remote connectivity. UDAN has provided an impetus to economic development of remote regions and contributed to a more equitable and inclusive growth in economic activity across the country. It has provided a boost to businesses with enhanced connectivity to industrial hubs, tourist destinations and made trade more efficient.

(c) Under the UDAN scheme, Airports in Rajasthan namely, Bikaner, Kishangarh and Jaisalmer have been operationalised. In addition, Sriganganagar Airport has also been identified for development and to operate RCS flights in the state of Rajasthan.

(d) & (e) Promoting affordability of regional air connectivity is envisioned under UDAN by supporting Selected Airline Operators (SAOs) through concessions by the Central Government, State Governments/UTs and airport operators to reduce the cost of operations on regional routes and providing financial (Viability Gap Funding or VGF) support to meet the gap. The airfare on the RCS seats on which VGF is provided to the Selected Airline Operators (SAOs) for a period of 3-years, is capped at a subsidised rate, and indexed at every quarter.
