

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA
STARRED QUESTION NO. : 68
(To be answered on the 24th July 2025)**

ROLE OF RCS-UDAN

***68. SHRI RADHESHYAM RATHIYA
DR. HEMANG JOSHI**

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION

नागर विमानन मंत्री

be pleased to state:-

- (a) the role of the Regional Connectivity Scheme - Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN) in promoting affordable air travel and balanced regional development in the country, State-wise including Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Himachal Pradesh;**
- (b) the details of new routes that have been started under the scheme so far;**
- (c) whether the Government has any plan to connect new destinations across the country under the said scheme and if so, the details thereof, State-wise including Shahdol Lok Sabha Constituency;**
- (d) whether the Government proposes to connect North-Eastern Region and remote, hilly and aspirational districts across the country and if so, the details thereof;**
- (e) whether the Government has taken any steps to start air services from Manpur airstrip in Sirohi district and no airline has submitted a bid even after five rounds of bidding for the RCS routes and if so, the details thereof; and**
- (f) whether the Government has received any feedback from airlines and passengers regarding the challenges faced in implementing the said scheme and if so, the details thereof?**

ANSWER

Minister of CIVIL AVIATION

नागर विमानन मंत्री

(Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu)

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

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (F) IN RESPECT OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 68 FOR ANSWER ON 24.07.2025 REGARDING "ROLE OF RCS-UDAN" BY SHRI RADHESHYAM RATHIYA AND DR. HEMANG JOSHI

(a) & (b):The Ministry of Civil Aviation launched the Regional Connectivity Scheme-Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN) on October 21, 2016, to enhance regional air connectivity to underserved and unserved areas of the country. 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 details of airports, heliports developed & RCS routes operationalised in the States of Chhattisgarh, Odisha & Himachal Pradesh under the UDAN Scheme are as follows:

Chhattisgarh: 26 RCS routes connecting 3 airports namely, Ambikapur, Bilaspur & Jagdalpur.

Odisha: 32 RCS routes connecting 4 airports namely, Jeypore, Jharsuguda, Utkela & Rourkela.

Himachal Pradesh: 32 RCS routes connecting 4 airports/Heliports namely, Shimla, Kullu, Rampur (H) and Mandi (H).

(c): RCS-UDAN is a market driven scheme in which the unserved and underserved airstrips/airports are listed for bidding by airlines to provide connectivity. Bidding rounds are conducted from time to time for covering more destinations and routes under the scheme. Based on their assessment of demand on particular routes, interested airlines submit their proposals at the time of bidding. In the UDAN 5.2 Round, which is specifically meant for small aircraft (20 seaters and below), Spirit Air has submitted a bid for the route Shahdol-Bhopal-Shahdol using 8-seater aircraft.

(d): During five rounds of bidding, 90 RCS routes have been operationalised in North Eastern States, connecting 12 airports/heliports of NER. In the hilly states of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, 92 RCS routes have been operationalised, connecting 17 airports/heliports in the two states.

The Government has announced the launch of the modified UDAN Scheme to increase regional connectivity to 120 new destinations and cater to 4 crore passengers over 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.

(e): Yes, Manpur airstrip is available in the list of unserved airstrips in the UDAN Scheme document. Under the Scheme, any airstrip, including Manpur in Sirohi district, is taken up for development and operationalisation on identification through valid bids for connectivity submitted by any airline in a bidding round.

(f):The Government has received feedback from both airlines and passengers regarding the challenges faced in implementing the UDAN Scheme. Some of the highlighted concerns are:

- i) Challenges in last-mile connectivity from the city centre to the airport**
- ii) Occasional flight diversions/cancellations due to weather at VFR airports**
- iii) Discontinuation of routes after completion of VGF tenure**
- iv) Occasional high ticket fares of non-RCS seats.**
