

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. : 3076
(To be answered on the 7th August 2025)**

AFFORDABLE AND ACCESSIBLE AIR TRAVEL

3076. SHRI ZIA UR REHMAN

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION

नागर विमानन मंत्री

be pleased to state:-

- (a) whether the Government is aware of the challenges being faced in the civil aviation sector, particularly with regard to high airfares, lack of adequate air connectivity in tier-2 and tier-3 cities, delays in airport infrastructure development, financial stress being faced by airlines and issues related to passenger safety and convenience;
- (b) if so, the details thereof along with the steps being taken by the Government to promote affordable and accessible air travel, improve regional connectivity, expedite infrastructure development, ensure the financial health of airlines, enhance safety standards and improve passenger services across the country through various schemes and policy initiatives; and
- (c) if not, the reasons therefor?

ANSWER

Minister of State in the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री

(Shri Murlidhar Mohol)

(a) to (c): The Ministry of Civil Aviation launched the Regional Connectivity Scheme - Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN) on October 21, 2016, to facilitate regional air connectivity by reviving unserved and underserved airports in Tier-2 & Tier-3 cities. Since the commencement of the scheme, 637 number of RCS routes have been operationalized, connecting 92 unserved and underserved airports, including 15 heliports and 2 water aerodromes across the country.

To ensure the affordability of regional air travel, the UDAN scheme 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. The airfare on the RCS seats on which VGF is provided to the Selected Airline Operators (SAOs) is capped for a 3-

year tenure.

The expansion and upgradation of airports is a continuous process and is undertaken by the Airport Operators from time to time depending on the availability of land, commercial viability, socio-economic considerations, traffic demand / willingness of airlines to operate to/from such airports. The National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016 seeks to provide a conducive ecosystem for overall growth of the Indian aviation sector in a harmonised manner that includes growth of all its sub-sectors viz airlines, airports, MRO, FTO etc.

Further, the DGCA ensures aviation safety through a robust oversight system, including regular surveillance, spot checks, and audits. It follows an Annual Surveillance Plan (ASP) for inspections and ensures that audit findings are addressed with verified corrective actions.
