

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION  
LOK SABHA

**STARRED QUESTION NO. : 383**

( TO BE ANSWERED ON THE 19th March 2026 )

**STRENGTHENING OF REGIONAL AIR CONNECTIVITY**

383. SHRI KANWAR SINGH TANWAR

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION

be pleased to state:-

(a) whether any provisions have been made in the Union Budget 2026–27 to strengthen regional air connectivity and airport infrastructure development with the objective of promoting tourism, facilitating trade and investment, improving last-mile and inter-regional connectivity and supporting balanced regional economic growth in the country;

(b) if so, the details of the Government's strategy regarding expansion and upgradation of airports, strengthening of air traffic management and navigation services, modernization of passenger and cargo handling facilities and policy and financial support for regional airline operations under regional connectivity initiatives; and

(c) the measures taken/proposed to be taken by the Government to ensure affordability of regional air travel, maintain high safety and security standards, enhance the operational viability of regional routes and encourage sustainable growth of regional aviation services?

**ANSWER**

Minister of CIVIL AVIATION

(Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu)

(a) to (c): A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

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**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (C) IN RESPECT OF LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 383 FOR REPLY ON 19.03.2026 REGARDING 'STRENGTHENING OF REGIONAL AIR CONNECTIVITY' ASKED BY SHRI KANWAR SINGH TANWAR**

(a) to (c): The Government has announced the introduction of a Seaplane VGF Scheme to provide support for Seaplane operations in the Union Budget 2026-27 to strengthen regional connectivity and promote tourism. The scheme is currently at formulation stage.

The Government has taken various steps for expansion of the airport infrastructure in the country, which, inter-alia, include grant of In-Principle' approval for construction of new Greenfield airports, upgradation and modernisation of existing airports by Airport Operators including Airports Authority of India, development/revival of unserved/underserved airports under Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) - UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) and promoting private investments in existing and new airports through the Public Private Partnership (PPP).

Expansion, Modernisation and development of airport infrastructure including strengthening air traffic management, modernisation of passenger and cargo handling facilities, is a continuous process, which is undertaken by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and the other Airport Operators/Developers concerned depending upon traffic demand, commercial feasibility, operational requirements for safety of aircraft operation and demand from airlines etc. Development works are taken up in a phased manner depending upon availability of land and viability, as well as other facilities with reference to intended aircraft operations.

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 at a subsidized rate. The above measures aim to strengthen affordability, accessibility and overall passenger convenience in the aviation sector, thereby promoting regional development and economic growth.

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