

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. : 1515
(To be answered on the 13th February 2025)**

IMPROVEMENT IN AIR CONNECTIVITY

1515. SHRI P C MOHAN

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION

be pleased to state:-

- (a) the steps being taken by the Government to ensure Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities benefit from improved air connectivity under the UDAN scheme;**
- (b) the manner in which the Government addresses the infrastructure challenges and financial sustainability;**
- (c) whether the Government has assessed the impact of policy updates such as UDAN 5.0 and the Air India-Vistara merger on Indian carriers' ½ global competitiveness and if so, the details thereof;**
- (d) the measures being implemented by the Government to ensure smaller airports have necessary safety, security and navigational services in underserved regions keeping in view the expansion of aviation infrastructure;**
- (e) the manner in which the Government addresses the demand for skilled aviation professionals to support the expansion in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities;**
- (f) the initiatives taken by the Government to promote sustainability in the civil aviation sector of the country; and**
- (g) whether the Government is exploring international partnerships to strengthen the position of the country as a global aviation hub and to support regional connectivity and if so, the details thereof?**

ANSWER

Minister of State in the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION

(Shri Murlidhar Mohol)

(a) : The Government has launched Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)-UDAN scheme on 21-10-2016 to facilitate / stimulate regional air connectivity by reviving unserved and underserved airports in Tier-2 & Tier-3 cities, for making air travel affordable to the masses. Under the Scheme, 619 RCS routes connecting 88 unserved and underserved airports, including 13 heliports and 2 water aerodromes have been operationalised.

(b) : Development / upgradation / modernization of airports in the country is a

continuous process. To improve the aviation infrastructure, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) and other PPP Airport Operators have embarked upon a Capex Plan from 2019-20 to 2024-25 for more than Rs.91,000 crore for development /upgradation / modernization of various airports in the country to meet the growing demands of air traffic and passenger growth. Projects include new airports, expansions and modifications of existing terminals, additional passenger facilities, new terminals, expansions and strengthening of runways and aprons, and ANS (Air Navigation Services) work like control towers and technical blocks.

(c) : The merger of Air India and Vistara has significant implications for the global competitiveness of Indian airlines such as :-

- Strengthened Market Position :The merger creates India's largest full-service airline, consolidating Air India's position in both domestic and international markets. It enhances fleet size and route network, making Air India a stronger global competitor**
- Improved Service Quality & Brand Image**
- The merger has also upgraded Air India's in-flight experience, leading to better customer retention on long-haul routes.**
- Expanded International Network : The merger allows better hub utilization at Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru, improving transit options for international travelers**
- Cost Synergies & Fleet Modernization : The combined entity will benefit from economies of scale, reducing operational costs.**
- Air India's ongoing fleet expansion (Airbus A350s, Boeing 777s, 787s) will help modernize long-haul offerings.**
- Common aircraft types will optimize maintenance and pilot training costs.**
- The merger will provide Competitive Edge Against Foreign Carriers**

(d) : Airports in India are provided with security equipments like CCTV, ATRS/X-BIS, DFMDs, HHMDs and ETDs etc. Some of the major airports are equipped with upgraded security systems and equipment like Dual View XBIS, Biometric Access Control System, Queue Management System, ATRS (Automotive Tray Retrieval System), PIDS (Perimeter Intrusion Detection System), Remote Screening and Digi Yatra- Face recognition based access. CISF manpower augmentation at airports is done based on survey/resurvey done by a committee led by BCAS.

(e) : In order to meet the requirement of aviation training, to encourage skill development and increase the domestic training capacity, the government has taken the following steps:-

(i) To augment the supply of trained pilots in the country, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has brought out a liberalised Flying Training Organisation (FTO) policy whereby the concept of airport royalty (revenue share payment by FTOs to AAI) has been abolished and land rentals have been significantly rationalised.

(ii) Airports Authority of India (AAI) has launched an internship scheme "Pradipti" with an aim to create interest in Civil Aviation among the students. The aims of the scheme are:

- Supplementing theoretical knowledge with practical operations / working.**
- Giving exposure to students in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) / non-STEM domains - widen horizons.**
- Giving opportunity to work on small-duration projects related to Civil Aviation.**

(f) and (g) : In 2016, the Government released the National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP 2016), which envisages key action steps covering over 20 aspects of the aviation value chain including: regional connectivity, safety, security, airlines, airports, bilateral traffic rights, code-share agreements, air navigation, helicopters, cargo, manufacturing, maintenance and skill development etc. The Government has been taking concrete steps to take flying to the masses by making it affordable, convenient and also provide safe, secure, affordable and sustainable air travel for passengers as well as air transportation of cargo with access to various parts of India and the world and establish an integrated eco-system which is leading to significant growth of the civil aviation sector.

India plans to become an aviation hub of choice for Indian passengers by 2030 and global aviation hub by 2047, competing with established hubs. The strategy leverages India's geographical advantage and includes limiting foreign carriers while strengthening domestic ones, resulting in Indian carriers' international traffic share increasing along with increase in I to I traffic.
