

UDAN Scheme

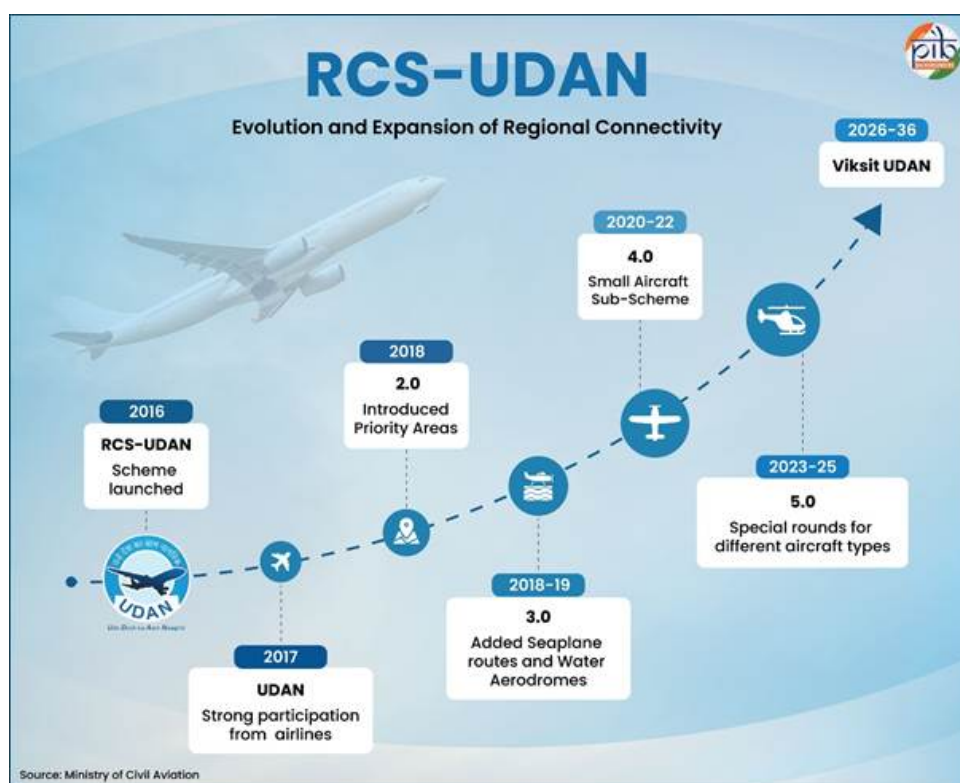
PIB Analysis

10 Years of Regional Air Connectivity

Overview

- UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) was launched on 21 October 2016 under the National Civil Aviation Policy, 2016, to make regional air travel affordable and connect unserved and underserved areas.
- India's operational airports increased from 74 in 2014 to 166 in 2026, making it the world's third-largest domestic aviation market.

Achievements of UDAN (as of October 2026)



- 687 regional routes operationalised.
- 95 aerodromes operationalised, including 17 heliports and 2 water aerodromes.
- Over 3.68 lakh flights operated and 1.72 crore passengers served.
- ₹5,091.23 crore disbursed as Viability Gap Funding (VGF) to support airlines.
- In the Northeast, 90 priority routes operationalised, while 12 of the 52 identified aerodromes have become operational.

Modified UDAN Scheme (2026-2036)

- Launched on 4 July 2026, the scheme has a total outlay of ₹28,840 crore over ten years (FY 2026-27 to FY 2035-36).

Key provisions:

- **Airport development:** 100 airports to be developed from existing unserved airstrips with ₹12,159 crore.
- **Operation and maintenance:** ₹2,577 crore to support approximately 441 aerodromes for three years.
- **Modern helipads:** 200 helipads to be developed with an outlay of ₹3,661 crore.
- **Airline support:** ₹10,043 crore allocated as VGF for regional routes.
- **Indigenous aviation:** ₹400 crore proposed for two HAL Dhruv helicopters for Pawan Hans and two HAL Dornier aircraft for Alliance Air.
- **Cooperative federalism:** 21 MoUs signed among the Centre, States/UTs and the Airports Authority of India (AAI).
- A dedicated Challenge Mode Portal enables States/UTs to nominate airstrips and helipads for development.

Regional Impact

- **Purnea, Bihar:** Improved connectivity for over 10 districts and reduced travel time to Kolkata to around two hours.
- **Tezu, Arunachal Pradesh:** Improved access to healthcare and enabled air cargo exports of agricultural produce.
- **Deoghar, Jharkhand:** Boosted religious tourism, medical access and hospitality around Baba Baidyanath Dham.
- **Kishangarh, Rajasthan:** Supported marble exports, tourism and aviation-related employment.

Significance and Way Forward

- Promotes tourism, agricultural trade, medical access, employment and balanced regional development.
- Challenges include operational sustainability, inadequate infrastructure and the financial viability of regional routes.
- Strengthening Centre-State coordination, maintaining aerodromes and promoting indigenous aircraft can improve long-term sustainability.

Conclusion

Modified UDAN seeks to move beyond expanding routes towards building a sustainable regional aviation ecosystem, supporting inclusive growth and connectivity across India.

Reference

[PIB](#)



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering