



Corporate Communications Directorate

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UDAN SCHEME TO ADD 120 NEW DESTINATIONS IN NEXT 10 YEARS

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NEW DELHI: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced on Saturday that the government will launch a modified version of its regional connectivity scheme, UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik), which will set out to connect 120 new destinations over the next decade.

"Inspired by the success of UDAN, a modified scheme will be launched to enhance regional connectivity to 120 new destinations and carry 40 million additional passengers in the next 10 years," Sitharaman said.

The finance minister allocated ₹530 crore for UDAN in 2025-26, compared to the revised estimate of ₹800 crore in 2024-25. The scheme, launched by PM Narendra Modi in October 2016, aims to make air travel affordable by improving connectivity from unserved and underserved airports. The modified scheme will expand to include support for helipads and smaller airports in hilly, aspirational, and northeastern regional districts, she said.

According to the Economic Survey tabled on Friday, UDAN has already operationalised 619 routes connecting 88 airports, including two water aerodromes and 13 heliports. The survey also revealed that airport operators and developers, including the Airports Authority of India, have achieved 91% of their ₹91,000 crore capital expenditure plan for FY20-FY25 as of November 2024. In addition to the modified UDAN scheme, Sitharaman announced plans for new greenfield airports in Bihar, supplementing the ongoing expansion of Patna airport and development of a brownfield airport at Bihta.

Industry leaders welcomed the announcements. Pieter Elbers, CEO of IndiGo, India's largest airline, said, "The budget outlined various great initiatives to develop a future-ready travel ecosystem, with emphasis on people and infrastructure, and aviation as a key enabler."

Ramendra Verma, partner and government consulting leader at Grant Thornton Bharat, emphasised the scheme's broader economic impact: "The modified UDAN scheme will boost regional connectivity, fostering economic growth by enhancing trade, tourism, and investment opportunities across underserved areas."

AAI to add cab pick-up point opposite airport's T1 terminal

The new location may be ready in March. The move will bring relief to passengers who were left fuming when the pick-up point was shifted to the multi-level parking facility about six months ago

Sunitha Sekar

CHENNAI

In what could be a big relief, air passengers can board a cab opposite the T1 domestic terminal of the Chennai airport from March. This used to be the cab pick-up point before being shifted to the multi-level car parking lot six months ago.

After the backlash from passengers, the Airports Authority of India (AAI) has planned to add a second pick-up point.

Hence, from March, passengers may board a cab opposite the T1 terminal or from the west wing of the multi-level parking lot.

Officials of the AAI said the decision was made at a high-level meeting held recently to review the ongoing works at the airport. "We are creating a plaza



Facelift in progress: Officials say work to build a plaza with seating and walkway facilities is on near the T1 terminal. B. VELANKANNI RAJ

opposite the T1 terminal with landscaping, seating and walkway [facilities]. The work will be completed next month. After that, cab pick-ups can be done from this location [as well]," an official said.

Till early July last year, air passengers could walk

to the cab pick-up point (near the flagpole) opposite the T1 terminal. However, the AAI changed the arrangement subsequently, as a result of which people had to head to the second floor in the west wing of multi-level car parking to board a cab.

Passengers have been fuming over this move as it caused "tremendous difficulty". It resulted in passengers carrying heavy baggage and walking to the multi-level car parking, before standing in a queue to take a lift to the second floor to board a cab.

Access pathway

Ravi Meenakshisundaram, an advocate and a frequent flyer, said though it was a good move to have a cab pick-up point opposite the T1 terminal, it was important to ensure an obstacle-free access pathway to the site. "The main issue is that there is no dedicated pathway [to the site] owing to construction works that are going on. Passengers should not be forced to drag their baggage and lift it every now and then before they can board a cab," he said.

Corporate Communications Directorate

DESHBHANDU

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025

सीएमपी प्लान में शामिल होगा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट

नोएडा, 1 फरवरी (देशबन्धु)। नोएडा प्राधिकरण ने रीजनल कॉन्प्रेहेंसिव मोबिलिटी प्लान (सीएमपी) में बदलाव किया है। पहले ये प्लान चार शहरों नोएडा, ग्रेटरनोएडा (गीतमबुद्ध नगर), गाजियाबाद, हापुड और बुलंदशहर को जोड़कर बनाया जा रहा था। लेकिन अब इसे विस्तारित किया जा रहा है। इस प्लान में नोएडा इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट, न्यू नोएडा, लॉजिस्टिक हब को भी जोड़ा जाएगा। ये प्लान इस पूरे पश्चिमी क्षेत्र को दिल्ली के साथ जाम मुक्त कनेक्टिविटी देने के लिए बनाया जा रहा है। जिसे आगामी 50 साल के लिए तैयार किया जाना है।

नोएडा प्राधिकरण के एसीईओ सतीश पाल ने बताया कि इस प्लान के लिए सलाहकार कंपनी का चयन किया जाएगा। जिसके लिए दोबारा से आरएफपी जारी की जाएगी। आरएफपी जारी करने से पहले सभी प्राधिकरण,

ट्रैफिक विभाग के साथ एक बार बैठक की जाएगी। जिसमें संसोधित रूप से इसके विषय पर बातचीत की जाएगी। इसके बाद आरएफपी जारी कर कंपनी का चयन करेंगे। बताया गया पहली बार में करीब सात कंपनियों ने इसमें रुचि दिखाई थी। लेकिन इसका विस्तार किया जा रहा है।

इस प्लान को लागू करपने का उद्देश्य कनेक्टिविटी को बढ़ावा देना है। एक बार ये प्लान लागू हो जाएगा तो पश्चिमी यूपी की इकोनॉमिक ग्रोथ में तेजी से बढ़ोतरी होगी। इन शहरों को आपस में जोड़ने के लिए सड़कों की चौड़ाई बढ़ाने से लेकर नए फ्लाईओवर, बॉटलनेक और ट्रांसपोटेशन को ध्यान में रखा जाएगा। मास्टर प्लान 2031 तक शहर में जो भी मोबिलिटी प्लान होगा उसे लागू किया जाएगा। वो कैसे लागू होगा इसके लिए सलाहकार कंपनी ही प्लान करेगी।

सभी जिलों के क्षेत्रीय प्लान को समझेंगे

प्राधिकरण ने बताया कि

- न्यू नोएडा और लॉजिस्टिक हब को भी किया शामिल
- 50 साल के लिए तैयार होगा प्लान

लोकल स्तर पर भी नए विकसित किए जा रहे शहर जिसमें न्यू नोएडा, न्यू आगरा सिटी और नोएडा एयरपोर्ट के कई मोबिलिटी प्लान हैं। सलाहकार कंपनी इन क्षेत्रीय प्लान का अध्ययन करेगी और उसमें दिए गए बेहतर प्लान या सुझाव को वो अपनी डीपीआर में शामिल करेगी। इसके लिए सलाहकार कंपनी को समय दिया जाएगा। ये प्लान कंपनी को कार्य अवाइड करने के छह महीने के अंदर देना होगा।

50 साल का प्लान होगा तैयार

दरअसल ये प्रकार का थिंक टैंक होगा। जिसमें इन सभी शहरों के अधिकारी और सलाहकार कंपनी सिर्फ इस बात

पर अध्ययन करेंगे कि आगामी 50 सालों तक दिल्ली से बेहतर कनेक्टिविटी और इस रीजन को कैसे जाम मुक्त बनाया जाए। जितने भी सुझाव आएंगे उनको कंपनी प्लान में शामिल करेगी और बनाने का काम संबंधित प्राधिकरण का होगा। बता दें हाल ही में इस प्लान को लेकर नोएडा के एक होटल में विस्तृत बैठक हो चुकी है।

नौ पाइंट पर बनेगा रीजनल प्लान

—सबसे पहले सलाहकार कंपनी लोकल अथॉरिटी के प्लानिंग सेल से बात करेगी और विजिट करके शहरी और ग्रामीण इलाकों की एक ब्रीफ तैयार करेगी। जिसमें लोकेशन, लैंड एरिया, रोड नेटवर्क, रीजनल इकोनॉमिक, स्ट्रक्चर उपलब्धता को शामिल किया जाएगा।

—सभी प्रकार की डाटा एनालिसिस रिपोर्ट को एकात्रित करना जिस में यहां सामाजिक परिवेश, रजिस्टर्ड वाहनों की

संख्या और ट्रांसपोर्ट नेटवर्क, अर्बन ट्रांसपोर्ट नियम, रीजनल ट्रांसपोर्ट पॉलिसी, नेशनल और स्टेट रूल, सड़क हादसे, लैंड यूज, मेप शामिल है।

■ इसके बाद एक प्राथमिक सर्वे प्लान तैयार किया जाएगा।

■ इसके बाद हितधारक, पब्लिक और अन्य लोगों से इस सर्वे प्लान पर बातचीत की जाएगी।

■ डिटेल् सर्वे की जिसमें यहां निर्मित इमारतों की संख्या, ट्रैफिक, रोड पर स्पीड, पार्किंग, पेडेस्ट्रन का डाटा लेकर ग्राउंड रिपोर्ट की जाएगी। ये टाइम, कास्ट, कंफर्ट, सेफ्टी और सिक्योरिटी के लिहाज से तैयार की जाएगी।

■ यहां एक महत्वपूर्ण पाइंट प्रदूषण से संबंधित भी होगा। इसके लिए डीजल, पेट्रोल, एलपीजी और इलेक्ट्रिक का डाटा लेकर ये चेक किया जाएगा कि इसका कितना असर प्लान के अनुसार कम होगा या बढ़ेगा।



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AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Corporate Communications Directorate

DANIK NAVJOYTI

JAIPUR

1 FEBRUARY 2025

कस्टम ने एयरपोर्ट पर पकड़ी पांच करोड़ की हाईड्रोपोनिक

ब्यूरो/नवज्योति, जयपुर। कस्टम विभाग की टीम ने जयपुर एयरपोर्ट पर शुक्रवार को एक बड़ी कार्रवाई करते हुए बैकक से आई दो महिलाओं के पास से करीब पांच करोड़ रुपये के मादक पदार्थ जब्त किए हैं। इन महिलाओं के पास पांच हाईड्रोपोनिक मिला है, जो कि एक भाग का पीछा होता है और नशे के काम में आता है। सूत्रों से मिली जानकारी के अनुसार दोनों महिलाओं के बैग की जांच में यह मादक पदार्थ मिला है। इसके बाद महिलाओं के पास मिले मादक पदार्थ को जब्त कर लिया गया और इसकी तस्करी के संबंध में पूछताछ की जा रही है।



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Corporate Communications Directorate

NAVBHARAT TIMES

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025

120 शहरों में नए एयरपोर्ट, 4 करोड़ को होगा फायदा



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■ नई दिल्ली : देश में छोटे शहरों के बीच एयर कनेक्टिविटी बढ़ाने के लिए उड़ान योजना के तहत 120 नए रूटों को जोड़ा जाएगा। इससे 4 करोड़ यात्रियों को फायदा मिलेगा। केंद्रीय नागर विमानन मंत्रालय को 2400 करोड़ रुपये आवंटित किए गए हैं। हालांकि यह रकम 2024-25 में आवंटित किए गए 2658 करोड़ रुपये से करीब 10 फीसदी कम है। उड़ान योजना के तहत खास तौर से देश के पूर्वोत्तर क्षेत्रों की एयर कनेक्टिविटी में और सुधार लाना है। बिहार में नए ग्रीन फील्ड एयरपोर्ट बनाने की बात कही गई।

ट्रांसपोर्ट सेक्टर की भी बल्ले: ट्रांसपोर्ट सेक्टर में ही केंद्रीय सड़क परिवहन एवं राजमार्ग मंत्रालय को वित्त वर्ष 2025-26 के लिए 2.87 लाख करोड़ रुपये से अधिक आवंटित किए गए हैं। रोड सेफ्टी के लिए भी बजट में प्रावधान किया गया है।

सेफ्टी पर ध्यान

एविएशन सिक्योरिटी के फ्रंट पर बजट का आवंटन बढ़ा है। इसमें इस बार 95 करोड़ रुपये आवंटित किए गए हैं। एविएशन सिक्योरिटी के लिए ये अभी तक का सबसे अधिक आवंटन है। इससे जाहिर है कि सरकार एविएशन सेक्टर में सेफ्टी के ऊपर और काम करने वाली है।



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RAJASTHAN PATRIKA

JAIPUR

1 FEBRUARY 2025

जयपुर इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट

छह फ्लाइट्स के संचालन में देरी से यात्री परेशान

जयपुर @ पत्रिका. जयपुर इंटरनेशनल एयरपोर्ट पर शुक्रवार को छह फ्लाइट्स का संचालन देरी से हुआ, जिससे यात्रियों को परेशानी से जूझना पड़ा। एयरपोर्ट प्रशासन से मिली जानकारी के अनुसार एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की नई दिल्ली से जयपुर फ्लाइट 2 घंटे की देरी से, थाई एयर एशिया की बैंकॉक से जयपुर की फ्लाइट 40 मिनट की देरी से, मुंबई से जयपुर फ्लाइट 35 मिनट की देरी से, सूरत से जयपुर 30 मिनट, इंडिगो

एयरलाइन की इंदौर व देहरादून से जयपुर फ्लाइट 20 मिनट की देरी से, चंडीगढ़ जयपुर फ्लाइट 10 मिनट की देरी से जयपुर पहुंची। इसके अलावा इंडिगो एयरलाइन की शाम को जयपुर से अहमदाबाद जाने वाली फ्लाइट व एयर इंडिया एक्सप्रेस की मुंबई जाने वाली फ्लाइट 30 मिनट की देरी से, जयपुर से कोलकाता की फ्लाइट 20 मिनट की देरी से, जयपुर से कोलकाता की फ्लाइट 35 मिनट से जयपुर से रवाना हुई।



Corporate Communications Directorate

TIMES OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

1 FEBRUARY 2025

New tech to reduce baggage screening time at A'bad airport

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: The international terminal at Ahmedabad airport introduced a new system to address concerns about lengthy queues and delays in baggage screening upon arrival. The Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International (SVPI) airport launched a customs screening room at Terminal 2, promising improved efficiency for travellers.

The facility features sophisticated x-ray machines that operate nearly five ti-



mes faster than the previous ones. This enhancement allows for quicker baggage collection while improving customs processing efficiency.

"The new system integrates a CCTV monitoring system to oversee the scree-

ning process and introduces a dedicated line to manage rejected bags without causing delays. This modification prevents the need for customs personnel to halt the conveyor when rejecting bags, ensuring a smoother flow of baggage and reducing congestion," the airport authorities said in a statement.

The upgraded baggage handling system ensures reduced processing time and minimal delays for passengers, especially during busy travel seasons.

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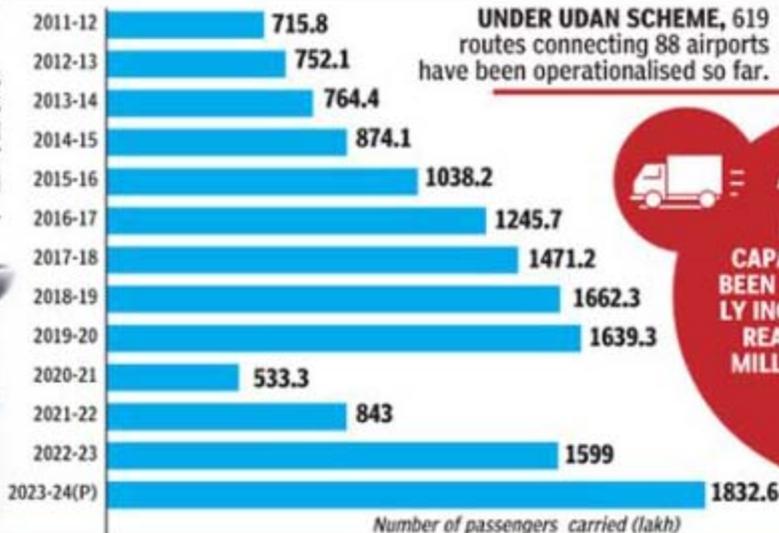
ASAIN AGE

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025

AVIATION

AIRPORT OPERATORS AND DEVELOPERS PURSUING A CAPEX PLAN OF ₹91,000 CR. ABOUT 91% OF THIS HAS BEEN ALREADY ACHIEVED.



UNDER UDAN SCHEME, 619 routes connecting 88 airports have been operationalised so far.



THE AIRPORT'S CARGO HANDLING CAPACITY HAS BEEN GRADUALLY INCREASING, REACHING 8.0 MILLION MT IN FY24.

Corporate Communications Directorate

ASIAN AGE

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025

Aviation allocation drops by 10%; 120 routes added

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, FEB. 1

The Centre has cut down budgetary allocation for the civil aviation ministry by nearly 10 per cent to ₹2,400.31 crore for 2025-26, compared to ₹2,658.68 crore in the revised 2024-25 Budget. The cut has also been made for the Regional Air Connectivity scheme UDAN which is set to get ₹540 crore, roughly 32 per cent lower compared to ₹800 crore in the previous year.

However, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the government will launch a modified UDAN scheme to connect 120 destinations to help four crore additional passengers in the next 10 years. She added the government will also facilitate Greenfield airports in Bihar to meet future needs of the state. The airlines welcomed the proposal to modify UDAN scheme saying it will make air travel more accessible as well as help boost overall economic growth.

Praising the regional connectivity scheme Sitharaman said, in her

Flying low



₹540 cr

- The money allocated for the UDAN scheme is now 32% lower than last year's ₹800 crore.

Budget speech, that UDAN has enabled 1.5 crore middle-class people to meet their aspirations for speedier travel. The scheme has connected 88 airports and operationalised 619 routes. Inspired by that success, a modified UDAN scheme will be launched to enhance regional connectivity to 120 new destinations.

This scheme will also support helipads and smaller airports in hilly, aspirational, and North East region districts, stated the finance minister.

She added the government will facilitate upgradation of infrastructure and warehousing for air cargo including high value perishable horticulture produce. Cargo screening and customs protocols will also be streamlined and made user-friendly.

The UDAN allocation is for revival of airports and for commencement of RCS routes, Viability Gap Funding for North East Connectivity. "To improve connectivity in the NE region, a new scheme has also been formulated for providing air connectivity and aviation infrastructure," said Budget papers.

Keeping in mind the security of air passengers, the allocation for the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) have been increased marginally to ₹330 crore and ₹95 crore, respectively, for 2025-26.

For DGCA the provision is for meeting the establishment expenditure at its head office and regional and field offices. It provides for Training Projects, eGCA Project.

UDAN to connect 120 new destinations

WINGS FOR AVIATION. Scheme to support helipads, airports in remote areas

Rohit Vaid

New Delhi

To enhance regional air connectivity, the Centre will launch a modified UDAN (*Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik*) scheme to connect 120 new destinations and ferry four crore passengers in the next 10 years, proposed Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Budget speech.

businessline was the first to report that the Finance Minister is mulling the new iteration of the scheme, unofficially known as 'UDAN 2.0' which intends to provide a cost-effective means to develop and operate over 100 underutilised airstrips in the country.

Sitharaman said the scheme will also support helipads and smaller airports in hilly and aspirational areas and the North-East region.

Since its inception, the scheme has facilitated the travel of around 1.5 crore passengers across more than



PAVING THE WAY. Development of greenfield airports in Bihar and upgrades to air cargo infrastructure are proposed

2.8 lakh flights. It has operationalised 619 routes, including for helicopters, and saw the number of operational airports in the country double from 74 in 2014 to over 157 in 2024.

GREENFIELD AIRPORT

The scheme incentivises the creation of new airports as well as refurbishment and expansion of existing facilities, besides supporting airlines to connect underserved regions by offering them viability gap funding (VGF) and other concessions

provided by airport operators, the Centre and State governments. Besides, Sitharaman proposed to facilitate the development of greenfield airports in Bihar to meet the future needs of the State. "These will be in addition to the capacity expansion of Patna airport and a brownfield airport in Bihar," she said on Saturday.

Sitharaman also proposed the Centre facilitate the upgradation of infrastructure and warehousing for air cargo, including high-value perishable horticulture pro-

duce, adding, "Cargo screening and customs protocols will be streamlined and made user friendly."

FUND ALLOCATION

The allocation for the older version of the UDAN scheme in the latest Budget has been pegged at ₹540 crore — far lower than the scheme's grant of ₹800 crore in the revised estimate (RE) of FY25.

Outlay for the Airports Authority of India for setting up new airports and the upkeep of existing facilities has been pegged at ₹4,193.83 crore. Overall, the Ministry of Civil Aviation's budgetary allocation was raised to ₹2,400.31 crore from ₹2,357.14 crore BE FY25.

'WELCOME MOVE'

Citing the Budget as forward-looking, Ajay Singh, Chairman and MD, of SpiceJet, said it is a middle-class-friendly Budget that promises to boost spending, stimulate development, and set the stage for India's growth in the coming years.

Corporate Communications Directorate

BUSINESS LINE

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025



“ With the modified UDAN scheme that will introduce 120 new destinations and bring 4 crore passengers into the fold, the aviation landscape in India is set for a transformative shift..

AJAY SINGH,
Chairman & MD, SpiceJet



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DANIK JAGRAN

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025

खराब दृश्यता के बीच 15 उड़ानें रद्द, एक डायवर्ट व 200 विलंबित

जासं, नई दिल्ली: शनिवार को कोहरे के कारण कम दृश्यता का उड़ान सेवाओं पर असर पड़ा। कई उड़ानें या तो रद्द कर दी गईं या इनके प्रस्थान में भारी विलंब की स्थिति रही। एक उड़ान को खराब दृश्यता के कारण जयपुर डायवर्ट करना पड़ा। यात्रियों की असुविधा को कम करने के लिए देर रात से ही एडवाइजरी जारी होने का सिलसिला शुरू हो गया।

खराब दृश्यता की स्थिति से जुड़ी चुनौतियों से निपटने में सक्षम नहीं होने के कारण 15 उड़ानें रद्द कर दी गईं। इसमें तीन आगमन व शेष 12 प्रस्थान की उड़ानें रहीं। प्रस्थान की जिन उड़ानों को रद्द किया गया, उन्हें गुवाहाटी, मुंबई, चंडीगढ़, जयपुर, दरभंगा, गोवा, अयोध्या व गोरखपुर की उड़ानें शामिल रहीं। वहीं आगमन की बात करें तो इसमें चंडीगढ़, गुवाहाटी व धर्मशाला से आ रही उड़ानें शामिल रहीं।

आइजीआई एयरपोर्ट से

कल वर्षा के आसार राबू जागरण नई दिल्ली: मौसम विभाग का पूर्वानुमान है कि रविवार की सुबह मध्यम श्रेणी का कोहरा रहने के आसार है। कहीं-कहीं घना कोहरा भी रह सकता है। अधिकतम एवं न्यूनतम तापमान क्रमशः 24 और नौ डिग्री रहने के आसार हैं। सोमवार की रात और मंगलवार को हल्की वर्षा होने की संभावना है। शनिवार को लगातार चौथे दिन दिल्ली की वायु गुणवत्ता बहुत खराब श्रेणी में रही। दिल्ली का एवयूआइ 355 रहा।

संचालित होने वाली करीब 200 उड़ानें ऐसी रहीं, जिनके प्रस्थान में 40 मिनट या इससे अधिक की देरी दर्ज की गई। इसमें दो तिहाई से अधिक की संख्या प्रस्थान की उड़ानों की रहीं।

● शनिवार को लगातार चौथे दिन वायु गुणवत्ता बहुत खराब रही

Corporate Communications Directorate

RS DANIK JAGRAN

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025

120 नए स्थानों को जोड़ने के लिए उड़ान योजना होगी संशोधित

नई दिल्ली, प्रेटर : भारतीय नागरिक उड्डयन बाजार की विकास क्षमता का दोहन करने के लिए सरकार ने शनिवार को केंद्रीय बजट में 120 नए स्थानों को जोड़ने के लिए संशोधित क्षेत्रीय हवाई संपर्क योजना 'उड़ान', बिहार में हवाई अड्डा परियोजनाओं और हवाई माल दुलाई के लिए बुनियादी ढांचे के अपग्रेडेशन की घोषणा की।

बजट 2025-26 में हालांकि नागरिक उड्डयन मंत्रालय के लिए आवंटन में लगभग 10 प्रतिशत की कटौती करके 2,400 करोड़ रुपये कर दिया गया है।



उड़ान (उड़ें देश का आम नागरिक) योजना के लिए धनराशि को भी 32 प्रतिशत घटाकर 540 करोड़ रुपये कर दिया गया है।

अपने बजट भाषण में वित्त मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण ने कहा कि उड़ान ने मध्य वर्ग के 1.5 करोड़ लोगों को तेज

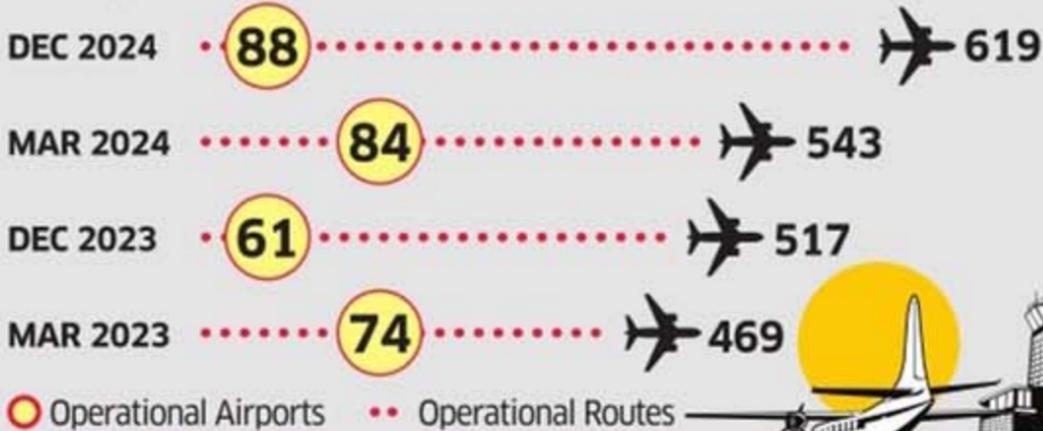
यात्रा की उनकी आकांक्षाओं को पूरा करने में सक्षम बनाया है। उन्होंने कहा, "उस सफलता से प्रेरित होकर अगले 10 वर्षों में 120 नए गंतव्यों तक क्षेत्रीय संपर्क बढ़ाने और चार करोड़ यात्रियों को ले जाने के लिए संशोधित उड़ान योजना शुरू की जाएगी। इस योजना में पहाड़ी, आकांक्षी और पूर्वोत्तर क्षेत्र के जिलों में हेलीपैड और छोटे हवाई अड्डों को भी सहायता दी जाएगी।" सीतारमण ने कहा कि बिहार में भविष्य की जरूरतों को पूरा करने के लिए ग्रीनफील्ड की सुविधा दी जाएगी।

UDAN on the Wing for 10 More Years to Draw Bharat Closer

Another 120 destinations and 40 m fliers targeted to be connected over next decade

Flight Path

Source: Parliament data



Team ET

Air connectivity to smaller cities is expected to get a boost with the government on Saturday announcing extension of the Regional Connectivity Scheme beyond its original tenure of 10 years.

This entails launching a modified version of the Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN) scheme for connecting 120 destinations and 40 million additional fliers over the next decade, finance minister Nir-mala Sitharaman said while presenting the budget.

The UDAN scheme was launched in October 2016 to get more people flying in what is already the world's fastest growing aviation market. Under the scheme, the government caps airfares and offers incentives, including subsidy, to attract airlines to fly less traversed routes.

Sitharaman said under the scheme, 619 routes connecting 88 airports, including two water aerodromes and 13 heliports, have been operationalised so far benefitting 14 million passengers.

“With the launch of a modified UDAN scheme that will introduce 120 new destinations and bring 40 million additional passengers in-

to the fold over the next decade, the aviation landscape in India is set for a transformative shift,” said Ajay Singh, chairman and managing director at SpiceJet.

“This initiative aligns perfectly with our vision of enhancing regional connectivity by linking Tier-3 and tier-2 cities directly to urban hubs, making air travel more

accessible than ever,” said Simran Singh Tiwana, CEO of Star Air.

Star Air, which started flights on more than 90% of the routes it won by bidding under the scheme, plans to expand its fleet to 14 aircraft by this year-end from

UDAN was launched in October 2016 to get more people flying in what is already the world's fastest growing aviation mkt

nine currently.

Touted as a major boost to air connectivity, the UDAN scheme however got a mixed result so far with only about 60% of the original 619 routes planned currently operational.

Also, multiple airports developed under the scheme such as Pakyong in Sikkim, Solapur and Sindhudurg in Maharashtra, and Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh do not have any flights currently.



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HINDUSTAN

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025

एयर इंडिया पर 30 लाख का जुर्माना

मुंबई। नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय ने टाटा समूह के स्वामित्व वाली एयर इंडिया पर 30 लाख रुपये का जुर्माना लगाया है। कंपनी पर आरोप है कि उसने अपने एक पायलट को कुछ नियामकीय आवश्यकताओं का अनुपालन किए बिना उड़ान संचालित करने की अनुमति दे दी।

डीजीसीए ने 29 जनवरी के आदेश में कहा, बार-बार एयरलाइन के रोस्टर से संबंधी शिकायतें सामने आ रही हैं। जुर्माना लगाने का आदेश तब आया जब 13 दिसंबर 2024 को एयर इंडिया के परिचालन प्रमुख और रोस्ट्रिंग प्रमुख सहित अन्य अधिकारियों को जारी कारण बताओ नोटिस का जवाब असंतोषजनक पाया गया।

उड़ान योजना से देश के 120 नए शहरों तक पहुंच आसान होगी

✈️ हवाई सेवा

नई दिल्ली, विशेष संवाददाता। आम बजट के जरिए सरकार ने पर्वतीय क्षेत्र, पूर्वोत्तर भारत समेत पर्यटन के लिहाज से अहम स्थलों को अगले 10 वर्षों में उड़ान सेवा से जोड़ने का लक्ष्य रखा है।

इस अवधि में 120 नए गंतव्य स्थलों को छोटे हवाईअड्डों, हवाईपट्टी व हेलीपैड के जरिए जोड़ा जाएगा। इस लक्ष्य को हासिल करने के लिए केंद्र सरकार ने संशोधित 'उड़ान' स्कीम की घोषणा की है। बजट में वित्त मंत्री ने



कहा कि हमारा लक्ष्य इन क्षेत्रों को सीधे जोड़कर चार करोड़ लोगों को हवाई कनेक्टिविटी प्रदान करना है।

देश में छोटे शहरों के बीच सीधे हवाई कनेक्टिविटी की सेवा शुरू करने के लिए अक्टूबर 2016 से उड़ान

योजना की शुरुआत की गई थी। वित्त मंत्री ने बताया कि उड़ान स्कीम के जरिए अब तक 1.5 करोड़ मध्यवर्गीय लोगों को तीव्र यात्रा सेवा मुहैया कराई गई है। योजना के तहत 88 हवाईअड्डों को जोड़ा गया है और 619 नए मार्गों को संचालित किया गया है। अब इसी सफलता से प्रेरित होकर संशोधित उड़ान योजना शुरू की जाएगी। संशोधित योजना 10 वर्ष के लक्ष्य को ध्यान में रखकर जाएगी। इसमें पर्वतीय क्षेत्र, पर्यटन के लिहाज से अहम क्षेत्र और पूर्वोत्तर के आकांक्षी जिलों पर ध्यान केंद्रित किया जाएगा।

Unbroken vigil

The mid-air collision in the U.S. shows
the need for heightened safety

A viation safety experts will be poring over one particular snatch of ATC instructions and exchange to unravel one of the worst air accidents in the United States in recent years. “PAT25, do you have the CRJ in sight?... PAT25, pass behind the CRJ.” Seconds later, another pilot in the vicinity asks air traffic control tersely, “Tower, did you see that?” The mid-air collision between an American Airlines flight, AA5342, a Bombardier CRJ700 regional jet with 64 passengers, while on finals to runway 33 at Ronald Reagan Washington National Airport, and a U.S. Army Sikorsky UH-60 helicopter and its three-member crew, has been described as a baffling accident in one of “the most controlled portions of airspace in the world”. The airport, which handled 25.5 million passengers in 2023, operates in a complex ecosystem: of commercial aviation, private aviation, military traffic as well as helicopter operations existing side by side, with flight paths that often overlap. It is also an area in political heartland, is near military bases and is in close proximity to Washington Dulles and Baltimore, the other aviation gateways. With such varied aviation operations – and, as a result, airport-specific procedures, which include manoeuvres for noise abatement – and also stringent safety and security requirements, some experts have focused on the potential for incidents to occur when the ‘borders’ of these operations converge. There will be questions, for example, about the operations of the 12th Aviation Battalion’s Army helicopter, a high-technology machine bristling with very accurate electronic aids. Even though it was on an annual night flight training session, the crash could well be a case of the Swiss cheese model of accident causation.

In the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA)’s safety records for Reagan, on air misses, about 10 involve military aircraft in 30 such incidents since 1987. A Government Accountability Office report (2021) shows that over a three-year period that ended in 2019, there were 88,000 helicopter operations within 48 kilometres of Reagan, and these included about 33,000 military and 18,000 law enforcement flights. There has also been some concern, from political quarters in particular, about a series of air incidents flowing from ‘understaffed’ air traffic control operations across the U.S. With the FAA’s International Aviation Safety Assessment (IASA) Program overseeing India as well, the crash investigation findings by the FAA and the National Transportation Safety Board will be most relevant – there are some airports in India that share civil and military traffic – as the Reagan accident is a reminder that air safety demands unbroken vigil.

Corporate Communications Directorate

HINDU

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

'Modified' UDAN to add 120 destinations

The regional air connectivity scheme launched in April 2017 for 10 years will get government support for 10 more years; a major upgrade of infrastructure and warehousing for cargo, including for high-value perishable horticulture produce, has been proposed in the Budget

Jagriti Chandra
NEW DELHI

UDAN, the air connectivity scheme for Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities, has received government support for another 10 years, with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announcing in her Budget speech that it would be "modified" so that 120 new destinations are added to carry four crore passengers in the next 10 years.

"The scheme has connected 88 airports and operationalised 619 routes. Inspired by that success, a modified UDAN scheme will be launched to enhance regional connectivity to 120 new destinations and carry four crore passengers in the next 10



Fresh impetus: A sum of ₹4,500 crore was set aside for reviving unused airports under UDAN during 2017-2026. FILE PHOTO

years," she said. Of the 619 routes, 370 are active while the rest are not. The Budget announcement did not contain fresh allocation for UDAN.

UDAN, also known as the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS), saw its first flight take off on April 27, 2017 from Shimla to Delhi,

with which the scheme was operationalised for 10 years.

A sum of ₹4,500 crore was set aside for reviving unused and underused airports across the country. Later, ₹1,000 crore more was allocated for the period from 2023 to 2026. It is reliably learnt that near-

ly ₹4,500 crore out of the allocation of ₹5,500 crore has been utilised so far.

Apart from airport development and expansion under UDAN, a subsidy is given to participating airlines for offering

50% of the aircraft seats at a discounted fare of ₹2,500 for one hour of flight. This subsidy is paid from the levy collected from every non-UDAN departing flight offered by various airlines, which is passed on to passengers. At the time of its launch, the RCS levy on non-UDAN flights was ₹5,000, which was raised to ₹6,000 from January 1 to March 31, 2023, and ₹6,500 from April 1, 2023 to April 30, 2027. A govern-

ment order on October 21, 2022 to raise the levy to ₹10,000, and ₹15,000, was opposed by airlines and later rescinded.

In Parliament last year, Minister for Civil Aviation

K. Rammohan Naidu said that airlines would be allowed to re-bid for routes after the three-year subsidy period expired as airlines were withdrawing from the RCS routes awarded to them after the expiry of the period during which the routes were not independently viable.

"The government could look at extending the incentive beyond three years by offering a reduced subsidy amount," Star Air CEO Simran Singh Tiwana told

The Hindu. The airline operates nearly 22 RCS routes.

The Finance Minister also announced that greenfield airports would be facilitated in Bihar to meet the future needs of the State. These will be in addition to the expansion of the capacity of Patna airport and a brownfield airport at Bihta.

For air cargo, the government will facilitate upgrading of infrastructure and warehousing for cargo, including high-value perishable horticulture produce.

The allocation for the Ministry of Civil Aviation for FY 2026 at ₹2,400 crore was 10% lower than the Revised Estimate of ₹2,658 crore for FY 2025.



Air ambulance crashes in US city, 7 killed

Associated Press

letters@hindustantimes.com

PHILADELPHIA: A medical transport jet transporting a child who had just completed treatment for a life-threatening condition, her mother and four crew members crashed into a Philadelphia neighbourhood shortly after takeoff on Friday evening, exploding in a fireball that engulfed several homes.

Philadelphia's mayor says one person on the ground was killed and 19 were injured when an air ambulance crashed to the ground in a city neighbourhood on Friday night.

Mayor Chelle Parker confirmed the casualties at a press conference on Saturday. Jet Rescue Air Ambulance, which operated the Learjet 55, said in a statement: "We cannot confirm any survivors."

There was no immediate word whether anyone on the ground was killed, but at least six people were treated for injuries at a hospital.

Everyone aboard the flight



First responders work the scene after a small plane crashed in Philadelphia, on Friday.

AP

was from Mexico. The child was being transported home, according to Jet Rescue spokesperson Shai Gold.

The flight's final destination was Tijuana after a stop in Misouri.

The patient and her mother were on board along with four crew members. Gold said this was a seasoned crew and every-

one involved in these flights goes through rigorous training.

"When an incident like this happens, it's shocking and surprising," Gold told The Associated Press.

"All of the aircraft are maintained, not a penny is spared because we know our mission is so critical."

Pennsylvania Governor Josh

Shapiro said at a news conference late on Friday that officials expected fatalities in the "awful aviation disaster."

"We know that there will be loss," he said.

A spokesperson for Temple University Hospital-Jeanes, Jennifer Reardon, said they had treated six people with injuries from the crash.

Three of those people had since been released and the others were in fair condition. She wasn't able to provide information about their injuries or where the people were when they sustained them.

The plane was registered in Mexico. Jet Rescue is based in Mexico and has operations both there and in the US. The crash came just two days after the deadliest US air disaster in a generation.

On Wednesday night, an American Airlines jet carrying 60 passengers and four crew members collided in midair in Washington, DC, with an Army helicopter carrying three soldiers. There were no survivors.

The Philadelphia crash was the second fatal incident in 15 months for Jet Rescue.

In 2023, five crew members died when their plane overran a runway in Morelos, Mexico, and crashed into a hillside.

In Philadelphia, a doorbell camera captured the plane streaking down and exploding near a mall. "We heard a loud roar, turned, and saw the big plume," said owner Jim Quinn.

The crash happened less than 5 kilometres from Northeast Philadelphia Airport, which primarily serves business jets and charter flights. The Learjet 55 quickly disappeared from radar after taking off from the airport at 6:06 pm and climbing to an altitude of 487 metres.

The plane, registered to Med Jets, was tracked by FlightAware. At 6 pm, LiveATC recorded an air traffic controller instructing "Medevac Medservice 056" to turn right. After repeating the request, the controller asked, "You on frequency?" Minutes later, they reported a lost aircraft and closed the field.



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MILLANIUM POST

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

Aviation Turbine Fuel price hiked by 5.6%, commercial LPG rate down ₹7 per cylinder

ATF price was increased by Rs 5,078.25/kilolitre to Rs 95,533.72/kl in Delhi

NEW DELHI: The price of Jet fuel, or ATF, on Saturday was hiked by a steep 5.6 per cent while the rate of commercial LPG that is used in hotels and restaurants was cut by Rs 7 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with the benchmark international prices.

The aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was increased by Rs 5,078.25 per kilolitre, or 5.6 per cent, to Rs 95,533.72 per kl in the national capital - home to one of the busiest airports in the country, according to state-



owned fuel retailers.

The hike follows a reduction in rates by 1.5 per cent in the previous revision on January 1.

Prior to that, prices were increased twice - Rs 2,941.5 per kl (3.3 per cent) on November 1,

and by Rs 1,318.12 per kl (1.45 per cent) on December 1, 2024.

The ATF price in Mumbai was increased to Rs 89,318.90 on Saturday, from Rs 84,511.93 per kl previously. Oil firms also reduced the price of commercial LPG by Rs 7 to Rs 1,797 per 19-kg cylinder in Delhi.

This the second reduction in the rate after five straight monthly hikes in commercial LPG price. The price was cut by Rs 14.5 per 19-kg cylinder at the last revision on January 1, 2024.

In five price hikes prior to

the two rounds of cuts this year, commercial LPG rate had been hiked by Rs 172.5 per 19-kg cylinder.

Commercial LPG now costs Rs 1,749.50 per 19-kg cylinder in Mumbai, Rs 1,907 in Kolkata and Rs 1,959.50 in Chennai. Prices of ATF and LPG differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes including VAT.

The rate of cooking gas used in domestic households, however, remained unchanged at Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder. #11

Corporate Communications Directorate

MILLANIUM POST

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025

Civil aviation ministry to get ₹2,400 cr, UDAN allocation falls to ₹540 cr

NEW DELHI: The budgetary allocation for the civil aviation ministry has been cut by nearly 10 per cent to Rs 2,400.31 crore for the next financial year, with the regional air connectivity scheme UDAN set to get a lower amount of Rs 540 crore.

The allocation in the Union Budget 2025-26, presented by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament on Saturday, is less compared to Rs 2,658.68 crore in the revised 2024-25 Budget.

Out of the total allocation for the next fiscal starting from April 1, 2025, UDAN will get Rs 540 crore, which is 32 per cent lower compared to Rs 800 crore in the year-ago period.



Interestingly, Sitharaman has announced that UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) scheme will be modified to connect 120 new destinations.

As per the budget papers, the allocation for the DGCA and BCAS have increased marginally to Rs 330 crore and Rs 95 crore, respectively, for 2025-26.

For the Customs Cost Recovery (CCR) charges to Airport Authority of India (AAI)

and AAI Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Company Ltd (AAICLAS) for tier II / III cities' airports, the allocation has been raised to Rs 142.75 crore from Rs 124.17 crore in the same period a year ago. In the next fiscal, Air India Asset Holding Ltd will get a slightly higher allocation of Rs 1,025.51 crore compared to Rs 1,017.67 crore in the current financial year.

The budgetary provision is for servicing of loan transferred to AIAHL as a result of financial restructuring of Air India.

In her Budget speech, Sitharaman said UDAN has enabled 1.5 crore middle class people to meet their aspirations for speedier travel. PTI



Novel, but promising

Aviation and maritime sectors have been late to climate change mitigation efforts, but now aim to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050 through focus on fuel efficiency, innovative designs, and enhanced maintenance

AUTHOR



KRISHNA GUPTA

In addition to vehicular emissions, primarily from cars, buses and trucks, airplanes also leave a substantial carbon footprint. Aviation contributes about 2.5 per cent of total annual emissions of greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide, ozone, methane, water vapor and nitrogen oxide and contrails (water vapor that condenses around the soot from the aircraft's exhaust). Shipping contributes to 3 per cent of total annual emissions, which include carbon dioxide and oxides of sulphur and nitrogen. However, since shipping carries almost 80 per cent of the international cargo, its impact per unit of cargo/passengers carried is much smaller than that of the aviation sector.

Emissions from the aviation sector

Emissions from the aviation sector are growing fast because of the rising number of passengers flying by air which, in turn, is because of the increasing affordability of air travel across the world. In 2023, there were 28,400 aircraft in the world, which carried out 4.5 billion journeys, in addition to carting cargo all over the world.

Ever since the publication of a study titled Special Report on Aviation and the Global Atmosphere, prepared by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 1999 at the request of International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO), many initiatives have been taken to reduce emissions in the sector. The ICAO has committed to reach net zero emissions by the year 2050. In addition, 191 member countries also agreed to curb emissions from aviation through a scheme called CORSIA (Carbon Offset and Reduction Scheme for International Aviation). This allows airlines to offset their emissions by invest-

ing in schemes that sequester carbon.

The USA has taken initiatives to curb emissions from aviation through tax credits and grants under the Inflation Reduction Act. For example, it had set aside USD 3.3 billion in 2022 to increase the production of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF), which is more environment friendly and can be blended with normal aviation

fuel. The EU has similarly set a target for a minimum amount of SAF to be blended. The UK announced its Jet Zero pledge in 2022 to support SAF projects. In addition, NASA is working with Boeing on improving the design of airplanes, with a focus on placement of engines, wing's aerodynamics and width of the fuselage. Interestingly, Boeing is working on 'winglets' and Airbus on 'sharklets', which are nothing but small airfoils that extend from the wingtips and improve fuel efficiency and reduce drag. They have been inspired by the wings of large birds, in which the wing ver-

isation (IMO) has pledged to reach Net Zero emissions by 2050. This will be achieved by improved fuels and better designed and efficient ships. While the EU has introduced the FuelEU Regulation to limit greenhouse gas emissions from the Shipping Sector, the US, through the Inflation Reduction Act has provided direct support for port emissions reduction. Other initiatives in the sector

include the Sustainable Shipping Initiative, which is a partnership between the largest 15 shipping companies, the World Wildlife Fund and Forum for the Future, to create a 'green' shipping sector by 2040. In another collaboration, the company RightShip and the Carbon War Room, came up with a rating system for all commercial vessels based on the carbon dioxide emitted.

In terms of new designs, Japan, Korea and China have taken the lead in improving designs, by using lighter material and improving fuel efficiency. There is also a move to build ships that are 'ammonia ready', i.e. which use Ammonia as fuel, hydrogen ready and methanol dual fuel ships. For example, AP Moller-Maersk, one of the biggest shipping companies in the world, announced 19 methanol dual-fuel container ships on order as of October 2022 for delivery between 2023 and 2025. Other companies such as CMA CGM, Cosco and Cargill, also gave similar orders. In all, in 2022, 90 (11 per cent by tonnage) new-build orders were for ammonia-ready vessels, 43 (7 per cent) were for methanol vessels and 3 were for hydrogen-ready vessels.

Aviation and maritime sectors have come on board after the Paris Agreement and have voluntarily fixed 2050 for reaching Net Zero emissions

trae are less pronounced at the tips, allowing more flexibility and increasing speed. Paul Hawken in his book 'Drawdown' mentions a research project by MIT, which is working on fuel saving during taxiing, takeoff and landing. It found that taxiing on a single engine can save substantial fuel on the ground.

Shipping sector

It is well known that more than 80 per cent of global trade takes place on ships. And all ships are totally dependent on fossil fuels. As noted above, the maritime sector is responsible for about 3 per cent of annual emissions in the world. The International Maritime Organ-

Conclusion

The Aviation and Maritime sectors were not a part of the international climate change negotiations for long. However, they have come on board after the Paris Agreement and have voluntarily fixed 2050 for reaching Net Zero emissions. In both sectors, fuel efficiency, design and between maintenance will be key to reaching the stated objectives.

The writer is Additional Chief Secretary, Department of Mass Education Extension and Library Services and Department of Cooperation, Government of West Bengal

Corporate Communications Directorate

MORNING STANDARD

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025

UDAN scheme to connect 120 new destinations

AVIATION

ARSHAD KHAN @ New Delhi

THE government will launch a modified UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) scheme to connect 120 new destinations, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said while presenting the Union Budget 2025-26. She claims that the modified scheme will help about four crore additional passengers in the next 10 years.

The regional connectivity scheme will also support heliports and smaller airports in hilly aspirational and northeastern regional districts, the finance minister added.

"With the launch of a modified UDAN scheme that will in-

troduce 120 new destinations and bring 4 crore additional passengers into the fold over the next decade, the aviation landscape in India is set for a transformative shift. This initiative will not only make air travel more accessible to remote regions but will also drive economic growth and tourism, further empowering local economies," said Ajay Singh, Chairman and Managing Director, SpiceJet.

Simran Singh Tiwana, CEO of Star Air said that the modified UDAN Scheme aligns perfectly with their vision of enhancing regional connectivity by linking tier-3 and tier-2 cities directly to urban hubs, making air travel more accessible than ever.

"The revised taxation system is expected to drive significant

economic growth in these emerging regions. Improved air access will not only boost tourism but also stimulate local economies, creating jobs and fostering development in previously underserved areas," added Singh.

Introduced in 2016, the UDAN scheme has benefited more than 1.4 crore passengers. Under the scheme, 619 routes connecting 88 airports, including two water aerodromes and 13 heliports, have been so far operationalised. The Economic Survey 2024-25 highlighted that the new airports and improved regional connectivity under the scheme have improved air connectivity considerably.

The Scheme, however, has its own challenges. Low occupancy on many routes and the financial

sustainability of these routes has been a major challenge. The Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) in its 2023 report had stated only 52% (403 out of 774 routes) of the awarded routes were unable to commence operations. Out of the 371 commenced routes, only 112 routes (30%) successfully completed the full concession period of three years.

The CAG report also said that among these 112 routes, only 54 routes (7% of the awarded routes) connecting 17 RCS Airports managed to sustain operations beyond the three-year concession period, as of March 2023. The FM in her budget speech also said the government will also facilitate greenfield airports in Bihar to meet the future needs of the state.

Transformative shift

With the introduction of 120 new destinations and bringing 4 crore additional passengers into the fold over the next decade, the aviation landscape is set for a transformative shift. This will make air travel more accessible to remote regions.



Corporate Communications Directorate

PIONEER

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025

Union Budget cuts allocation for aviation by 10 per cent, UDAN gets ₹540 Crore

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■
NEW DELHI

The budgetary allocation for the Ministry of Civil Aviation has been cut by nearly 10 per cent to Rs 2,400.31 crore for the next financial year, with the regional air connectivity scheme UDAN set to get a lower amount of Rs 540 crore. The allocation in the Union Budget 2025-26, presented by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament on Saturday, is less compared to Rs 2,658.68 crore in the revised 2024-25 Budget.

Out of the total allocation for the next fiscal starting from April 1, 2025, UDAN will get Rs 540 crore, which is 32 per cent lower compared to Rs 800 crore in the year-ago period.

Interestingly, Sitharaman has announced that UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) scheme will be modified to connect 120 new destinations.

As per the budget papers, the allocation for the DGCA and BCAS have increased marginally to Rs 330 crore and Rs 95 crore, respectively, for 2025-26. For the Customs Cost Recovery (CCR) charges to Airport Authority of India (AAI) and AAI Cargo Logistics and Allied Services Company Ltd (AAICLAS) for tier II / III cities' airports, the allocation has been raised to Rs 142.75 crore from Rs 124.17 crore in the same period a year ago.

In the next fiscal, Air India Asset Holding Ltd will get a slightly higher allocation of Rs 1,025.51 crore compared to Rs 1,017.67 crore in the

current financial year. The budgetary provision is for servicing of loan transferred to AIAHL as a result of financial restructuring of Air India.

In her Budget speech, Sitharaman said UDAN has enabled 1.5 crore middle class people to meet their aspirations for speedier travel. "Inspired by that success, a modified UDAN scheme will be launched to enhance regional connectivity to 120 new destinations and carry 4 crore passengers in the next 10 years. The scheme will also support helipads and smaller airports in hilly, aspirational, and North East region districts," the minister said.

According to the budget papers, UDAN allocation is for revival of airports and for commencement of RCS routes, Viability Gap Funding for North East Connectivity. "To improve connectivity in NE region, a new scheme has also been formulated for providing air connectivity and aviation infrastructure," it added. India is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets.

Airlines welcomed the proposal to modify UDAN scheme to provide regional air connectivity to 120 new destinations, saying the move will make air travel more accessible as well as help boost overall economic growth. Presenting the Union Budget for 2025-26, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Naagrik) has enabled 1.5 crore middle-class people to meet their



aspirations for speedier travel.

SpiceJet Chairman and Managing Director Ajay Singh said the budget is forward-looking and middle class-friendly and aims to boost spending and stimulate development. "With the launch of a modified UDAN scheme that will introduce 120 new destinations and bring 4 crore additional passengers into the fold over

the next decade, the aviation landscape in India is set for a transformative shift. This initiative will not only make air travel more accessible to remote regions but will also drive economic growth and tourism, further empowering local economies," he said in a statement.

Regional airline FLY91's MD and CEO Manoj Chacko said UDAN scheme has been a pathbreaking initiative in enhancing regional air connectivity.

"Regional aviation has the potential to be a key driver of growth, connecting underserved cities and unlocking their economic potential. As a pure play regional airline focused on Tier 2 and Tier 3 destinations, we at FLY91 see this as a transformative step that will accelerate air travel accessibility and drive growth across India," he said.

Corporate Communications Directorate

PIONEER

LUCKNOW

1 FEBRUARY 2025

India's aviation sector needs a take off



SANTHOSH MATHEW

India's aviation sector is at a crossroads, grappling with an acute shortage of airports despite its vast population and growing economy

Have you ever wondered just how many airports exist in the United States? Take a wild guess. The number is staggering—nearly 19,000! That's right. With a population of around 330 million, America has built an extensive network of airports, ensuring seamless connectivity across the country. Now, compare this to India, a nation with three times the population, yet managing with only around 500 airports. Even more striking, out of these, just 29 are classified as international airports. This glaring disparity is more than just a number—it is a reflection of India's challenges in aviation infrastructure and the pressing need for expansion.

Let's take an even closer look by comparing West Bengal to the United Kingdom. Both regions have a similar population, yet their aviation networks couldn't be more different. The UK boasts around 150 airports, while West Bengal has just three passenger airports—Kolkata, Bagdogra, and Andal. This difference is not just a matter of convenience; it highlights lost economic opportunities and underscores the urgent requirement for infrastructure development. In nations like the US and the UK, air travel is an everyday convenience—affordable, efficient, and integral to daily life.

It allows people to skip traffic, save time, and stimulate economic growth. Meanwhile, in India, air travel is still seen as a luxury, accessible only to a privileged few. India's aviation network is wholly insufficient for its growing demand. With only 29 international airports and about 500 total airports, the infrastructure is struggling to keep pace with the needs of domestic and international travelers. Airports in major cities such as Delhi, Mumbai, and Bengaluru are perpetually overcrowded, leading to delays, congestion, and inefficiency.

In contrast, vast portions of the country, especially smaller towns and rural areas, remain disconnected, relying on outdated modes of transportation like railways and highways. The Airports



Authority of India (AAI) currently manages around 150 airports, but when compared to the United States' 5,000 civilian airports, this number falls dramatically short. The gap becomes even more concerning when considering that India's population is three times that of the US. Clearly, India needs a massive expansion in its aviation infrastructure, and it needs it urgently. The consequences of this limited aviation network are significant—reduced regional connectivity, hindered tourism, and slower economic growth. India must take decisive steps to address this issue. A bold vision for the future should include constructing at least 1,500 new airports in the coming years.

By ensuring that an airport is within 100 kilometers of every major population center, India can unlock the economic potential of its smaller towns and rural areas. The advantages of a well-developed air travel network are crystal clear. Air travel is not just the fastest mode of transportation; it is also the safest and most efficient. In a country where roads and railways are often congested and prone to delays, a robust aviation network can alleviate pressure on existing transport systems, making movement across the country more seamless.

The economic benefits are also immense. A surge in the

number of airports would create thousands of jobs, attract investment, and boost regional economies. Improved air connectivity would enhance business operations, enable easier travel for tourists, and offer the general population a practical alternative to time-consuming road and rail journeys. Of course, developing new airports requires significant investment and time, but India has the potential to explore innovative solutions. One such approach is the conversion of highways into emergency runways—a model successfully implemented in the United States. This concept could be adapted for India, where strategically modifying highways to accommodate small aircraft could provide crucial air connectivity to remote regions without the high costs associated with building entirely new airports. Implementing such a strategy in states like West Bengal, could be a game-changer.

These adapted road-runways could serve as cost-effective alternatives for enhancing air connectivity, benefiting both everyday commuters and emergency responders in times of crisis, such as natural disasters.

Across the Western world, air travel has evolved into an indispensable part of daily life. It is widely accessible, efficient, and affordable. In India, however, flying is still

perceived as a luxury, something beyond the reach of the average citizen.

This perception needs to change. In a country as vast and populous as India, air travel must become a fundamental necessity, available to people across all economic backgrounds. Expanding the aviation network would make flights more affordable and practical for a larger segment of the population.

India stands at a crucial juncture in its aviation journey. The country's rapid economic growth and massive population necessitate an equally rapid expansion of its air travel infrastructure. Government initiatives such as the UDAN scheme, which aims to enhance regional air connectivity, are a step in the right direction, but much more needs to be done. The goal should be to develop at least 1,500 new airports in the near future, ensuring that every region, particularly underserved areas like West Bengal, is well-connected.

Exploring innovative ideas like highway-runways, making air travel more affordable, and significantly increasing the number of airstrips are all essential steps toward closing India's aviation gap. The need for a robust aviation infrastructure is urgent, and the time to act is now.

(The writer is an associate professor; views are personal)



IN A COUNTRY AS VAST AND POPULOUS AS INDIA, AIR TRAVEL MUST BECOME A FUNDAMENTAL NECESSITY, AVAILABLE TO PEOPLE ACROSS ALL ECONOMIC BACKGROUNDS. EXPANDING THE AVIATION NETWORK WOULD MAKE FLIGHTS MORE AFFORDABLE AND PRACTICAL FOR A LARGER SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION



Corporate Communications Directorate

RAJASTHAN PATRIKA

JAIPUR

1 FEBRUARY 2025

विमानन कंपनियों ने आधा किया किराया

प्रयागराज @ पत्रिका

सरकारी दखल के बाद नागरिक
उड्डयन महानिदेशालय

(डीजीसी) की अपील पर कई
विमानन कंपनियों ने प्रयागराज
के लिए उड़ानों की संख्या बढ़ा
दी है। इससे औसत किराए में
50 फीसदी तक कमी आई है।
दिल्ली-प्रयागराज के लिए जहां
पहले 29 हजार रुपए प्रति यात्री
किराया वसूल किया जा रहा था,
वह अब 10 हजार तक हो गया
है। इंडिगो ने महाकुंभ अवधि
तक 900 उड़ानें निर्धारित
की हैं। अन्य एयनलाइनों ने भी
किराया कम किया है।



भारतीय विमानपत्तन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

Corporate Communications Directorate

RASHTRIYA SAHARA

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025

उड़ान योजना में जुड़ेंगे 120 नए गंतव्य पर बजट आवंटन घटा

नई दिल्ली (एसएनबी)। संसद में शनिवार को पेश वित्त वर्ष 2025-26 के बजट में नागर विमानन मंत्रालय के लिए आवंटन लगभग 10 प्रतिशत घटाकर 2,400.31 करोड़ रुपये कर दिया गया है। वहीं, क्षेत्रीय हवाई संपर्क योजना 'उड़ान' के लिए भी आवंटन घटाकर 540 करोड़ रुपये करने का प्रस्ताव है। वित्त मंत्री निर्मला सीतारमण द्वारा पेश किए गए केंद्रीय बजट 2025-26 में आवंटन 2024-25 के संशोधित बजट 2,658.68 करोड़ रुपये की तुलना में कम है। एक अप्रैल, 2025 से शुरू होने वाले अगले वित्त वर्ष के लिए कुल आवंटन में से 'उड़ान' को 540 करोड़ रुपये मिलेंगे, जो कि एक पिछले साल के 800 करोड़ रुपये के आवंटन की तुलना में 32 प्रतिशत कम है। दिलचस्प बात यह है कि सीतारमण ने घोषणा की है कि 'उड़ान' (उड़ें देश का आम नागरिक) योजना को संशोधित कर 120 नए गंतव्यों को जोड़ा जाएगा।

■ नागर विमानन क्षेत्र
के लिए सिर्फ 2400
करोड़ का आवंटन

बजट दस्तावेजों के अनुसार, 2025-26 के लिए नागर विमानन महानिदेशालय (डीजीसीए) और नागर विमानन सुरक्षा ब्यूरो (बीसीएएस) के लिए आवंटन मामूली रूप से बढ़ाकर क्रमशः 330 करोड़ रुपये और 95 करोड़ रुपये कर दिया गया है। अगले वित्त वर्ष में एयर इंडिया एसेट होल्डिंग लिमिटेड (एआईएचएल) को चालू वित्त वर्ष के 1,017.67 करोड़ रुपये की तुलना में थोड़ा अधिक 1,025.51 करोड़ रुपये का आवंटन मिलेगा।

With more routes, runways, Udan set to go full throttle

TEAM TOI

Already the world's fastest-growing aviation market, India is set to witness a surge in air travel with a modified version of the 'Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik' (Udan) scheme.

In her Budget speech, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said govt will expand regional connectivity to 120 new destinations with an aim to carry 4 crore passengers over the next decade. She also proposed new greenfield airports for Bihar, along with the expansion of the Jay Prakash Narayan International Airport in Patna and the development of a brownfield airport at Bihta near Patna.

Sitharaman said Udan had enabled 1.5 crore middle-class people to access faster travel, connecting 88 airports and operationalising 619 routes. "Inspired by that success, a modified Udan scheme will be launched... The scheme will also support helipads and smaller airports in hilly, aspirational, and districts in North-Eastern states," she said.

The push to develop tourism by enhancing the country's top 50 destinations,



WINGS FOR EVERY WALLET

streamlining e-visa facilities, and introducing visa-fee waivers for select tourist groups is expected to drive air traffic further. Meanwhile, Indian airlines continue their rapid expansion, reinforcing the country's position as a growing aviation hub.

IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers said: "The Budget has outlined various great initiatives to develop a future-ready travel ecosystem, with emphasis on people and infrastructure, and aviation as a key enabler. Investment in world-class airports, regional connectivity, capacity upgrades, and streamlined visa facilities will play a critical role in bringing this vision of India

as a global aviation hub to life. By strengthening both domestic and international connectivity, we are fuelling economic progress, bridging communities, and reinforcing aviation's role as a catalyst for national growth."

Air India Express MD Alope Singh said the continued focus on aviation and tourism, along with new airports and a modified Udan scheme, would spread the benefits of air travel across the country. "The focus on developing 50 tourist destinations and promoting medical tourism will stimulate fresh demand, create new travel corridors, and strengthen the aviation ecosystem..." he said.

Corporate Communications Directorate

TIMES OF INDIA

DELHI

2 FEBRUARY 2025

DGCA imposes ₹30L penalty on Air India for flouting rules

New Delhi: Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has imposed a Rs 30 lakh penalty on Air India for allowing a first officer to operate a flight without the mandatory recency requirements, reports **Saurabh Sinha**.

In its Jan 29 order, DGCA stated a first officer “operated a flight on July 7 despite not having the mandatory recency requirement of three take-offs and landings, leading to violation of (rules). The (rostering) controllers overlooked multiple spurious alerts.”

The airline has been directed to act against three senior rostering department officials and inform the regulator about it within 15 days.

Comments from AI were awaited till the time of going to press. DGCA had issued a show cause to AI heads of operations and rostering on Dec 13. Their reply was found “unsatisfactory” following which, on Jan 29, AI was asked to deposit the penalty amount within 30 days.

Civil aviation wings clipped with 10% cut

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 1

The budgetary allocation for the Civil Aviation Ministry has been cut by nearly 10 per cent to Rs 2,400.31 crore for the next financial year, with the regional air connectivity scheme Udan set to get a lower amount of Rs 540 crore.

The allocation in the Union Budget 2025-26, presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament on Saturday, is less compared to Rs 2,658.68 crore in the revised 2024-25 Budget.

Out of the total allocation for the next fiscal starting from April 1, 2025, Udan will get Rs 540 crore, which is 32 per cent lower compared to Rs 800 crore in the year-ago period.

Meanwhile, the Finance Minister announced launching a modified Udan scheme to bring 120 new destinations under the regional connectivity network to carry four crore passengers in the next 10 years.

Presenting the Budget proposals in Parliament, Sitharaman said the scheme would also support helipads and smaller airports in hilly, aspirational, and North-East region districts.

The Finance Minister said the existing Udan scheme connected 88 airports and operationalised 619 routes. Approximately, 1.5 crore people have travelled by air by taking advantage of the scheme, she said.

She also announced facilitating upgrade of infrastructure and warehousing for air cargo, including high value perishable horticulture produce. Cargo screen-

UDAN TO COVER 120 MORE AIRPORTS

■ Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday announced a modified Udan scheme to bring 120 new destinations under the regional connectivity network to carry four crore passengers in the next 10 years

■ However, of the total allocation for the next fiscal starting from April 1, 2025, Udan will get ₹540 crore, which is 32% lower compared to ₹800 crore in the year-ago period



ing and customs protocols would also be streamlined and made user-friendly.

The Finance Minister also proposed facilitating greenfield airports in Bihar to meet the future needs of the state. These will be in addition to the expansion of the capacity of Patna airport and a Brownfield airport at Bihta, she said.

Civil Aviation Minister K Ram Mohan Naidu said the Budget reinforced the government's commitment to enhancing regional connectivity with the idea of 'ease of travel'. "Udan is more than just a transportation initiative; it is about bringing aspirations and opportunities closer to people. Having already enabled 1.5 crore passengers to experience affordable air travel, our target is to extend this benefit to 4 crore more in the next decade," he said.

(With agency inputs)

Corporate Communications Directorate

TRIBUNE

DELHI

2 JANUARY 2025

Why profit looks like greed as airlines jack up fares

PUSHPA GIREMAJ

AS the Maha Kumbh fever grips Indians, all roads lead to Prayagraj in Uttar Pradesh. Out to make the most of it are the air carriers, with their extortionate fares that defy logic. Greed, I guess, has no logic and one can see it in the way airlines have hiked their fares to Prayagraj.

Since airlines deploy 'dynamic pricing', one can understand a reasonable hike in fares compared to off-season rates. But the highly inflated airfares that we are seeing today is extremely exploitative and against all canons of reasonableness and fairplay. Depending on the date, time and the duration of the flight, some of the return flights from Chennai to Prayagraj, for example, cost over ₹1,10,000. And I am not talking about business class. For this amount, one can get a return ticket to Chicago. Similarly, from Delhi, some of the return flights cost ₹60,000 — one can get a return ticket to Paris with that kind of money!

One of the major components of airfare is the cost of fuel. So, if the airlines are charging for travel from Chennai to Prayagraj or from Delhi to Prayagraj what it would cost to travel to Chicago or Paris, one can see the sheer profiteering at the cost of travellers, and the complete failure of the regulator to protect consumers.

True, the airlines have the freedom and the flexibility to determine the fares on the basis of demand and supply. They also have the right to earn profit. However, the profits, like the fare hikes, should be reasonable. Anything beyond that would be undue profiteering and highly exploitative. And airlines that are fleecing consumers intending to go to Prayagraj are today guilty of that. Sub-rule (1) of Rule 135 of the Aircraft Rules 1937 qualifies 'profit' as 'reasonable' when it refers to the components of the tariff that the airlines have to establish. But where is that reasonableness?

Only a month ago, the government had informed Parliament that the Tariff Monitoring Unit (TMU) under the Directorate General of Civil Aviation monitored airfares to ensure that airlines did not charge



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airfares outside the range declared by them. The runaway airfares to Prayagraj from different parts of the country shows the ineffectiveness of this mechanism and calls for a more robust system of not merely monitoring the prices, but anticipating high demands during certain situations and seasons and taking stringent pre-emptive action. This includes augmentation of services to meet the high demand and preventing exploitation of consumers by the airline industry.

As consumer complaints reached a crescendo and several MPs and even the Ministry of Consumer Affairs called for the protection of consumers, the DGCA finally acted — resulting in some of the airlines announcing 30-50 per cent reduction in fares and an increase in the number of flights, but much more needs to be done to normalise the fares. The DGCA's regulatory power over the airlines will come under intense scrutiny this month when the demand rises even further on several days

The launch of Udaan Yatri Cafe is a good start, but non-availability of water and food at reasonable prices at airports remains a concern

of February, said to be holy days for taking a dip in the confluence of the three rivers.

Of course, this is not the first time that the airlines have exploited the high demand to jack up prices exponentially and it is this avariciousness that has given rise to a demand for a cap on airfares. Unfortunately, attempts by air passengers to get the courts to intervene on this matter have not borne fruit. In a case filed by the Kerala Pravas Association on the exorbitant fares

charged by airlines plying between Kerala and the Gulf during festive seasons and holidays, the Supreme Court directed the petitioners to go to the high court. The Kerala High Court, in turn, expressed concern over the exorbitant airfares, but advised the petitioners to seek relief through the Competition Commission of India.

Also, if the recent order of the apex court (in HSBC vs. Avanz) is any indication, consumers are not likely to get much help from the courts. The Supreme Court here set aside the 30 per cent cap on credit card interest rates imposed by the apex consumer court and said the commission was stepping into the statutory domain of the regulator — the Reserve Bank of India.

While on the topic of consumer protection vis-a-vis the aviation sector, I must bring up two more issues of consumer concern — non-availability of water and food at reasonable prices at airports.

Considering the adverse effects of dehydration on human beings, it is the responsibility

of the government to ensure that water fountains providing safe water are available at all airports. These can be fixed right outside washrooms or inside the washrooms. In addition, water bottle vending machines that dispense bottled water at prices sold outside the airport should be made available in large quantities so that air travellers hydrate themselves without spending exorbitant sums on it.

The Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs' battle with highly-priced bottled waters at airports has been long and, unfortunately, unsuccessful. When the ministry took action against those selling water at prices above the maximum retail price (MRP), the airport vendors started getting water specially packed for airports at a higher MRP. The ministry then prohibited dual pricing with effect from January 1, 2018, and since then, new brand names specifically meant for airports are selling at high prices. This cartel has to be broken through water-vending machines and free water fountains.

Exorbitantly-priced food at airports is another major problem affecting air passengers. Recently, the civil aviation ministry, along with the Airports Authority of India, launched a new concept — Udaan Yatri Cafe — to make food available at very reasonable prices to air passengers and hopefully, this will be replicated in other airports.

Such cafes, if established in large numbers, could make a difference and also force others to bring down their prices in order to meet the competition.

Bringing down the high rentals and other charges on restaurants could also bring down food prices at airports.

Coming back to high airfares, I must end with a positive order of the Panchlala district consumer commission (PR. Singhania vs. Interglobe Aviation Ltd, February 11, 2020), wherein it asked the airline to refund 53 per cent of the inflated airfare charged from the consumer! Orders such as these, if upheld by the highest court (most unlikely), could also discourage airlines from imposing formidable costs on air travellers.

— The writer is a consumer rights and safety expert