



MoU for Seaplane Services in India

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Why in News

The **Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways** and the **Ministry of Civil Aviation** signed **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)** for **Development of Seaplane Services** in India.

India's **first seaplane service started** operation between Kevadia and Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad in October 2020, under **Sagarmala Seaplane Services**.

Key Points

- **About MoU:**

- This MoU envisages **developing non-scheduled and scheduled operation of seaplane services** within territorial jurisdiction of India.
- Seaplane services will be **developed as a part of the RCS-UDAN** (Regional Connectivity Scheme-Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik) **initiative of the Civil Aviation Ministry**.
- The **Shipping Ministry** would **identify and develop waterfront aerodromes and other required infrastructure**.
- The **Civil Aviation Ministry** will **select potential airline operators** through a bidding process. It will **also incorporate the location and routes** as identified by the Shipping Ministry.

- **Benefits:**

- This MoU will help in **expediting the development of new water aerodromes** and also **operationalisation of new seaplane routes** in India.
- It will not only **enhance seamless connectivity** across the nation by promoting eco-friendly transportation through seaplanes but also give a boost to the tourism industry.
- It will **lead to an increase in tourism and hotel business** at the local level. It will also serve **employment to local people**.
- Establishment of water airports will contribute to an increase in the level of current **social infrastructural facilities** (healthcare, education, community housing, etc.) at the proposed sites.

- **About UDAN Scheme:**

- **Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik (UDAN)** was launched as a regional connectivity scheme under the **Ministry of Civil Aviation in 2016**.
- The **objective of the scheme** is to create affordable yet economically viable and profitable flights on regional routes so that flying becomes affordable to the common man even in small towns.
- The **scheme envisages providing** connectivity to **un-served and underserved** airports of the country through the revival of existing air-strips and airports. The scheme is operational for **a period of 10 years**.

Under-served airports are those **which do not have more than one flight** a day, while unserved airports are those where there are no operations.

- **Financial incentives** from the Centre, state governments and airport operators are extended to selected airlines to encourage operations from unserved and under-served airports, and keep airfares affordable.
- **About UDAN 4.1:**
 - The UDAN 4.1 focuses on connecting **smaller airports, along with special helicopter and seaplane routes**.
 - Some new routes have been proposed under the **Sagarmala Seaplane services**.
 - **Sagarmala Seaplane Services:**
 - It is an **ambitious project under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways**.
 - The project is being initiated under a **Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)** framework through **prospective airline operators**.
 - The project execution and implementation would be through **Sagarmala Development Company Ltd (SDCL)**, which is under the administrative control of the Ministry.
 - To provide connectivity and easier accessibility to remote locations, SDCL is exploring plans to **leverage the potential of the vast coastline and numerous water bodies/rivers** across India by commencing seaplane operations.

Several destinations are envisaged for seaplane operations. Seaplanes will utilise the nearby water bodies for take-off and landing and thus connect those places in an economical way as conventional airport infrastructure like a runway and terminal buildings are not required for seaplane operations.
 - The **routes** may be operated under the **government's subsidised UDAN scheme**.

Source: PIB