



## 5 Years of UDAN

**For Prelims:** UDAN Scheme, Civil Aviation

**For Mains:** UDAN Scheme, Government's Policies & Intervention

### Why in News?

Recently [UDAN \(UdeDeshKaAamNagrik\)](#), a **Regional Connectivity Scheme** of the **Ministry of Civil Aviation** has completed 5 years of success since the launch of its first flight by the Prime Minister on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2017.

### What do we need to know about the UDAN Scheme?

#### ▪ About:

- **Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik (UDAN)** was launched as a **Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)** under the **Ministry of Civil Aviation** in 2016.
- It was formulated based on the review of **The National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP)-2016** and it was planned to remain in force for a period of 10 years.
  - Under this Scheme, **Regional Connectivity Fund (RCF)** was created, which funds the **Viability Gap Funding (VGF)** requirements of the scheme through a levy on certain domestic flights.
    - VGF means a grant one-time or deferred, provided to support infrastructure projects that are economically justified but fall short of financial viability.

#### ▪ Objectives:

- To develop the **regional aviation market**.
- To provide affordable, economically viable and profitable air travel on regional routes to the common man even in small towns.

#### ▪ Features:

- The scheme envisages **providing connectivity to unserved and underserved airports** of the country through the revival of existing air-strips and airports.
  - 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.

#### ▪ Achievements So Far:

- There were **74 operational airports in 2014** which has **increased to 141 by now**.
- **68 underserved/unserved destinations** which include 58 Airports, 8 Heliports & 2 Water Aerodromes have been connected under UDAN scheme.
- With 425 new routes initiated, **UDAN has provided air connectivity to more than 29 States/ UTs** across the country.
- **More than one crore passengers** have availed the benefits of this scheme as on 4<sup>th</sup> August 2022.

#### ▪ Targets:

- **220 destinations** (airports/heliports/water aerodromes) under UDAN are targeted to be **completed by 2026** with 1000 routes to provide air connectivity to unconnected destinations in the country.
  - Under UDAN, **954 routes have already been awarded to connect 156 airports.**
- **Awards & Recognition:**
  - RCS-UDAN was awarded the [Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Administration](#) under Innovation Category for the year 2020.
  - [Republic Day Tableau for 26<sup>th</sup> January 2022](#) on UDAN was adjudged as the Best **Tableau by the Ministry of Defence.**

## How has the UDAN Scheme's Performance been?

- **UDAN 1.0**
  - Under this phase, **5 airlines companies were awarded 128 flight routes to 70 airports** (including 36 newly made operational airports).
- **UDAN 2.0**
  - In 2018, the Ministry of Civil Aviation announced **73 underserved and unserved airports.**
  - For the first time, **helipads were also connected under phase 2 of the UDAN scheme.**
- **UDAN 3.0**
  - **Inclusion of Tourism Routes** under UDAN 3 in coordination with the Ministry of Tourism.
  - Inclusion of **Seaplanes for connecting Water Aerodromes.**
  - Bringing in a number of routes in the **North-East Region under the ambit of UDAN.**
- **UDAN 4.0**
  - In 2020, **78 new routes were approved under the 4<sup>th</sup> round of RCS-UDAN** to further enhance the connectivity to remote & regional areas of the country.
  - **Kavaratti, Agatti, and Minicoy islands of Lakshadweep** will be connected by the new routes of UDAN 4.0.
- **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** is an ambitious project under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways with potential airline operators.
- **UDAN 5.0**
  - In 2021, the Ministry of Civil Aviation **flagged off 6 routes**, expanding the **aerial connectivity of North-East India**, under the UDAN Scheme.
- **Lifeline UDAN:**
  - It was launched for **transportation of medical cargo during pandemic.**
  - It commenced in March 2020 during [COVID-19 period](#) and it helped to operate 588 flights transporting almost 1000 Tonnes of voluminous cargo and essential medical services to various parts of the country.
- **Krishi UDAN:**
  - It was launched for **value realization of agriculture products** especially in Northeastern Region (NER) and tribal districts
- **International UDAN:**
  - Under International UDAN, the plan is to **connect India's smaller cities directly to some key foreign destinations in the neighbourhood.**

## Way Forward

- Airlines have leveraged the scheme strategically towards gaining additional slots at congested tier-1 airports, monopoly status on routes and lower operational costs.
  - Thus, **stakeholders should work towards making the UDAN scheme sustainable on**

**its own and improve its efficiency.**

- Airlines should undertake **marketing initiatives** so that more and more people can take advantage of the UDAN scheme.
- **More infrastructure is required** for the successful implementation of the scheme across the country.

### UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

**Q.** Examine the development of Airports in India through joint ventures under Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model. What are the challenges faced by the authorities in this regard? **(2017)**

**Q.** International civil aviation laws provide all countries complete and exclusive sovereignty over the airspace above their territory. What do you understand by 'airspace'? What are the implications of these laws on the space above this airspace? Discuss the challenges which this poses and suggest ways to contain the threat. **(2014)**

**Source: PIB**

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