

Airports Inaugurated in Madhya Pradesh under UDAN Scheme

Why in News?

The <u>Prime Minister</u> virtually inaugurated the newly constructed **Satna Airport and the upgraded Datia Airport in Madhya Pradesh,** taking a major step towards strengthening **regional connectivity and advancing infrastructure development** under the <u>UDAN scheme</u>.

Key Points

Satna Airport:

- Developed by the <u>Airports Authority of India (AAI)</u> at a cost of Rs 36.96 crore, Satna Airport is set to become a key regional hub in northeast Madhya Pradesh.
 - The airport will enhance connectivity to prominent destinations such as Chitrakoot and Maihar, strengthening both cultural and industrial linkages.
- Key features include a recarpeted runway, parking bays for Dornier-228 aircraft, an ATC tower, and a fire station.
 - Sustainable features include 100% LED lighting, solar-powered streetlights, and a treated water reuse system for <u>horticulture</u>.

Datia Airport:

- The upgraded Datia Airport has been developed at a cost of Rs 60.63 crore, connecting this
 historic town to the national aviation grid.
 - Datia, known for landmarks like <u>Peetambara Peeth</u> and the **Datia Palace**, stands to gain from **increased religious and cultural tourism**.
- The airport is currently suitable for ATR-72 aircraft and is being prepared for future operations of Airbus A-320 aircraft.
- Infrastructure includes a recarpeted runway, apron bays, an ATC tower, and firefighting services, along with <u>rainwater harvesting</u> and <u>energy-efficient lighting</u> systems.

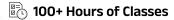
Driving Socio-Economic Transformation:

- The operationalisation of both airports will boost economic activity, create employment, and improve access to key services in the **Bundelkhand and Baghelkhand regions.**
- These projects reflect the Centre's focus on inclusive growth under the UDAN scheme, making affordable air travel a reality for underserved regions.

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UDAN Scheme

About:

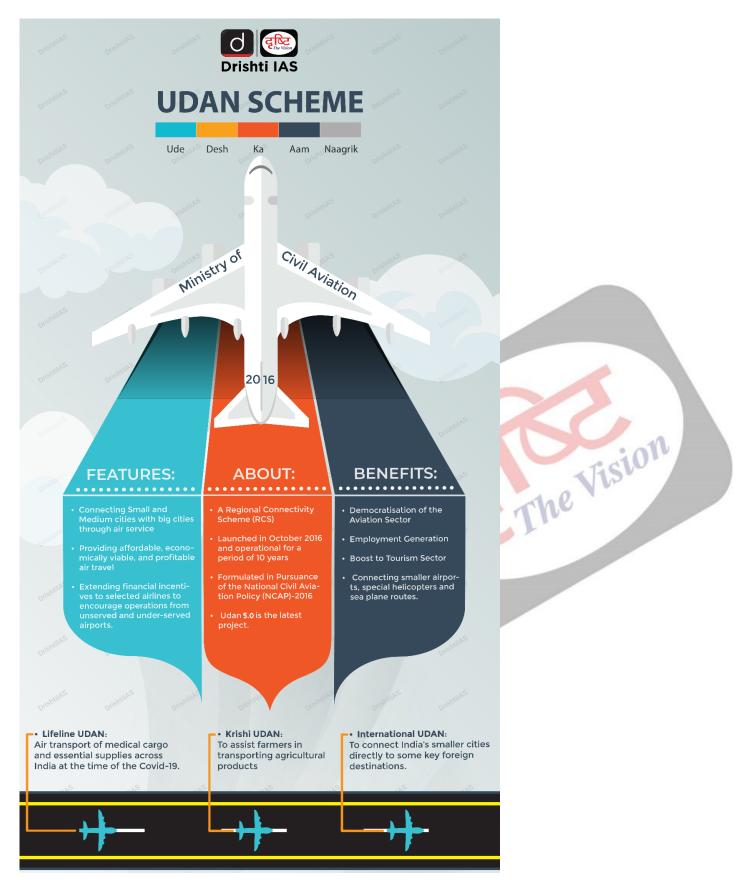
- UDAN aims to democratize aviation and enhance regional connectivity, ensuring that even remote regions of the country are accessible by air.
- The scheme was designed under the <u>National Civil Aviation Policy (NCAP) 2016</u>, with a focus on connecting <u>Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities</u> through a market-driven yet financially supported model.
 - The <u>Airports Authority of India (AAI)</u> serves as the nodal agency responsible for its implementation.

Key Features of UDAN Scheme:

- Viability Gap Funding (VGF): Financial support to airlines to ensure affordable fares.
 - Regional Connectivity Fund (RCF) was created to meet the viability gap funding requirements under the scheme.
- Airfare Cap to ensure affordability.
- Reduced taxes on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF) and other concessions to airlines to make operations viable on regional routes.
- Collaborative Governance between the Centre, States, the AAI, and private airport operators.

Key Innovations under UDAN:

- UDAN Yatri Cafes: Affordable Yatri Cafes have been launched at Kolkata and Chennai airports, offering quality food at accessible prices.
- Krishi UDAN Scheme: Designed to support farmers and improve value realisation for agriproduce, Krishi UDAN facilitates timely and cost-effective air logistics, particularly from
 Northeast, hilly, and tribal regions.
- Lifeline Udan was launched to transport essential medical cargo to remote areas during the <u>Covid-19</u> pandemic.



Airports Authority of India (AAI)

- The AAI is a statutory body under the <u>Directorate General of Civil Aviation</u>, Ministry of Civil Aviation.
- It was formed in 1995, by merging the National Airports Authority and the International Airports Authority of India.
- It also provides Air Traffic Management Services over Indian airspace and adjoining oceanic

areas.

- The functions of AAI include airport development, airspace control, passenger and cargo terminal management, and provision of communication and navigation aids.
- AAI provides air navigation services over 2.8 million square nautical miles of air space.

Pitambara Peeth

- Pitambara Peeth is a Hindu temple complex which also includes an ashram, located in Datia city of Madhya Pradesh.
- The **Shri Vankhandeshwar Shivalinga** located here is believed to be from **the Mahabharata period**. This temple is one of the major centers of **Shakti Sadhana**.
- The Peetha was **established in 1935 by Swamiji Maharaj** with the cooperation of **Raja** Shatrujit Singh Bundela of Datia.

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