

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION
LOK SABHA
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO. : 708
(To be answered on the 24th July 2025)**

ENHANCEMENT OF REGIONAL AIR CONNECTIVITY

708. SHRI RAJU BISTA

Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION

नागर विमानन मंत्री

be pleased to state:-

- (a) the details of initiatives taken by the Government to enhance regional air connectivity and affordability in West Bengal;**
- (b) the number of passengers travelled and flights operated under the Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) since its inception, particularly in West Bengal;**
- (c) the specific regions or airports identified for development on priority under the said scheme, particularly in West Bengal; and**
- (d) the steps being taken by the Government to ensure long-term sustainability and inclusivity in regional air connectivity across the country?**

ANSWER

Minister of State in the Ministry of CIVIL AVIATION

नागर विमानन मंत्रालय में राज्य मंत्री

(Shri Murlidhar Mohol)

(a) and (b): The Government launched Regional Connectivity Scheme- Ude Desh Ka Aam Nagrik (RCS-UDAN) scheme on 21-10-2016 to facilitate/stimulate regional air connectivity by reviving unserved and underserved airports in Tier-2 & Tier-3 cities. 637 RCS routes have so far been operationalized. The Scheme has connected 92 unserved and underserved airports across the country.

In the state of West Bengal, Durgapur and Cooch Behar Airports have been developed and operationalised under the Scheme.

A total of 153.59 lakh domestic passengers have travelled in more than 3.14 lakh RCS flights across the country including West Bengal as on July 15, 2025 under the Scheme.

(c): RCS-UDAN is a market driven Scheme where bidding rounds are conducted from time to time to cover more destinations and routes. Revival / up-gradation of unserved and underserved airstrips is undertaken upon its

identification through a valid bid and award to the Selected Airline Operator (SAO). Durgapur, Cooch Behar, Burnpur, Malda, Kalaikunda and Hashimara have so far been identified for the development and operation of RCS flights in West Bengal.

(d): In order to improve long-term sustainability of the routes and to address these issues, the government provides viability gap funding (VGF) to airlines, supports the upgrading of regional airports, and encourages operational flexibility. Further, eligible routes that were discontinued in the past rounds due to various reasons such as airline failure, are also re-bid, awarded and operationalised in the subsequent rounds.
