

Regarding operation and revival of Malda airport in West Bengal

SHRI ISHA KHAN CHOUDHURY (MALDAHA DAKSHIN): Respected Madam Chairperson, I would like to bring to your kind notice a matter of great concern about Malda airport, which is a non-operational airport of the Airports Authority of India.

The airport became operational in 1960 offering direct flights to Kolkata, Delhi, and Guwahati. However, operations were halted in 1972 due to the Bangladesh War. In 1980, with the concerted efforts of late A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhury, the airport was revived and continued to be operational until 1989.

In order to revive the airport operations, the Government of India signed an MoU with the Government of West Bengal on 29th June, 2016 for the lease of 114 acres of land for 30 years to develop the airport under the national RCS-UDAN Scheme. Furthermore, the Civil Aviation Ministry requested the State Government to confirm that the land is free from encumbrance and to guarantee the provision of essential services such as security, fire, and meteorological support for the operation and management of the airport.

However, it has been nine long years since the MoU was signed between the Central Government and the State Government, and there is no visible progress for this much needed project. Due to Malda's growing economic significance and strategic location, as a midpoint between North and South Bengal, the revival of this airport will significantly enhance trade, tourism, and regional connectivity.

I would request the Civil Aviation Minister to immediately intervene in order to expedite the approval and execution of Malda airport for the economic and tourism growth of the people of Malda and West Bengal. Thank you.