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Cabinet Approves Modified UDAN Scheme with ₹28,840 Crore Outlay

Published On: 27-03-2026



The Union Cabinet has approved the revamped Regional Connectivity Scheme – UDAN (Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik) with a total outlay of ₹28,840 crore for a period of 10 years (2026–27 to 2035–36). The scheme aims to enhance regional air connectivity by linking unserved and underserved areas across India and making air travel affordable for the common citizen.

Key Features of Modified UDAN

- Development of 100 new airports/airstrips in underserved regions
- Construction of 200 helipads, especially in hilly, remote, and island areas
- Provision of Viability Gap Funding (VGF) of about ₹10,000+ crore to support airlines
- Financial support for operation and maintenance of regional airports
- Promotion of indigenous aircraft manufacturing under Atmanirbhar Bharat

Objectives and Significance

- Improve connectivity to Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities
- Boost economic growth, trade, and tourism in remote regions

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Ensure affordable air travel for citizens

Enhance emergency response and healthcare access in difficult terrains

Contribute to the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047

Background of UDAN Scheme

Originally launched in 2016 under the National Civil Aviation Policy

Objective: “Ude Desh ka Aam Nagrik” (Let the common citizen fly)

Over 663 routes operationalised across 95 airports/heliports

More than 1.6 crore passengers have benefited since inception

Additional Facts:

Viability Gap Funding (VGF): Financial support to make unprofitable routes viable

UDAN integrates with major initiatives like Bharatmala, Sagarmala, and Digital India

Focus on North-East, hilly, and aspirational districts

Helps in balanced regional development and reduces pressure on metro cities

Supports growth of regional airlines and aviation infrastructure