

(b) the various measures Government has taken or shall take to enhance air connectivity to hilly regions, Islands and smaller cities?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI JAYANT SINHA): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Civil Aviation has launched RCS-UDAN scheme on 21-10-2016 to facilitate / stimulate regional air connectivity by making it affordable. Promoting affordability of Regional air connectivity is envisioned under RCS by supporting airline operators through (i) concessions by Central Government, State Governments and airport operators to reduce the cost of airline operations on regional routes and (ii) financial support (Viability Gap Funding or VGF). Operations under the Scheme are permitted through fixed wing aircraft (including sea planes) and helicopters, provided that operations through helicopters are permitted only among the States of Jammu and Kashmir, North Eastern Regions, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep Islands.

Compassionate appointments in Air India

1774. SHRI RAJ BABBAR: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

- (a) the policy of compassionate appointments in vogue in Air India;
- (b) the number of requests and representations received for compassionate appointment in Air India during the last three years and the current year, year-wise;
- (c) whether any action has been taken by Government on these requests/representations; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI JAYANT SINHA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The number of requests and representations received for compassionate appointment in Air India during the last three years and the current year are as follows:—

Year	Request Received
2014	33
2015	38
2016	54
2017 (till date)	29
TOTAL	154

(c) and (d) Erstwhile Air India and Indian Airlines merged into a new entity in 2007. Before merger both the erstwhile companies were following their own policies on compassionate appointment. After merger all appointments were put on hold in November, 2007.

The policy on Compassionate Appointment in merged entity was formulated and implemented in April, 2016. As per the said policy, dependents of employees who died on or after 1st January, 2016 are eligible for compassionate appointment under this policy. Till now 38 compassionate appointments have been made, under the policy dated 06.04.2016.

Upgradation of airports in North Eastern Region

1775. SHRIMATI RANEE NARAH: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) the steps being taken to upgrade Guwahati, Dibrugarh, Agartala and Imphal Airports to a regional aviation hub; and

(b) the policy and programme being taken to increase the frequency of intra-regional services with this hub?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI JAYANT SINHA): (a) Development/Upgradation of airports is a continuous process which is undertaken by Airports Authority of India (AAI) from time to time depending upon traffic demand, availability of land and other resources. For development of Guwahati Airport as inter-regional hub and Agartala, Dibrugarh and Imphal as Intra-regional hubs in the North eastern region, AAI has already constructed three hangars at Guwahati Airport, commenced construction of hangars at Dibrugarh and Imphal airports and floated tenders for award of work for construction of hangar at Agartala airport.

(b) Operations in domestic sector have been deregulated and airlines are free to operate anywhere in India subject to compliance of Route Dispersal guidelines. However, actual operations by airlines are guided by commercial viability and their company policy.

Utilisation of space in SGRDJ airport, Amritsar

1776. SHRI SHWAIT MALIK: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is planning to utilise the first floor of Shri Guru Ram Dass Jee (SGRDJ) International Airport, Amritsar to provide space for the lounges