

## **Regarding operationalization of Balurghat airport**

**DR. SUKANTA MAJUMDAR (BALURGHAT):** Balurghat Airport at Mahinagar, holds immense potential to be a catalyst for economic growth and regional connectivity. However, despite the Airports Authority declaring its readiness for operation in December 2021, the airport remains shrouded in the shadows of bureaucratic delays and unanswered questions. The delay in operationalizing this vital infrastructure project has caused frustration and disappointment and the lack of air connectivity cripples economic development, discourages tourism, and restricts access to timely medical services. Businesses struggle to compete effectively due to the logistical hurdles caused by limited transportation options. The reasons behind this inordinate delay remain unclear. While the AAI declared the facilities ready, questions linger about the Government's reaction to this assessment. Was there a lack of coordination between the AAI and the State Government? Has the State Government expressed any reluctance to hand over control of the airport to the AAI? The operationalization of the Mahinagar Airport is not just about bricks and mortar; it is about unlocking the economic potential of a region and improving the lives of millions of people. The Government must act with urgency and accountability to ensure that this long-awaited dream becomes a reality and people get the Balurghat airport functional at the earliest.