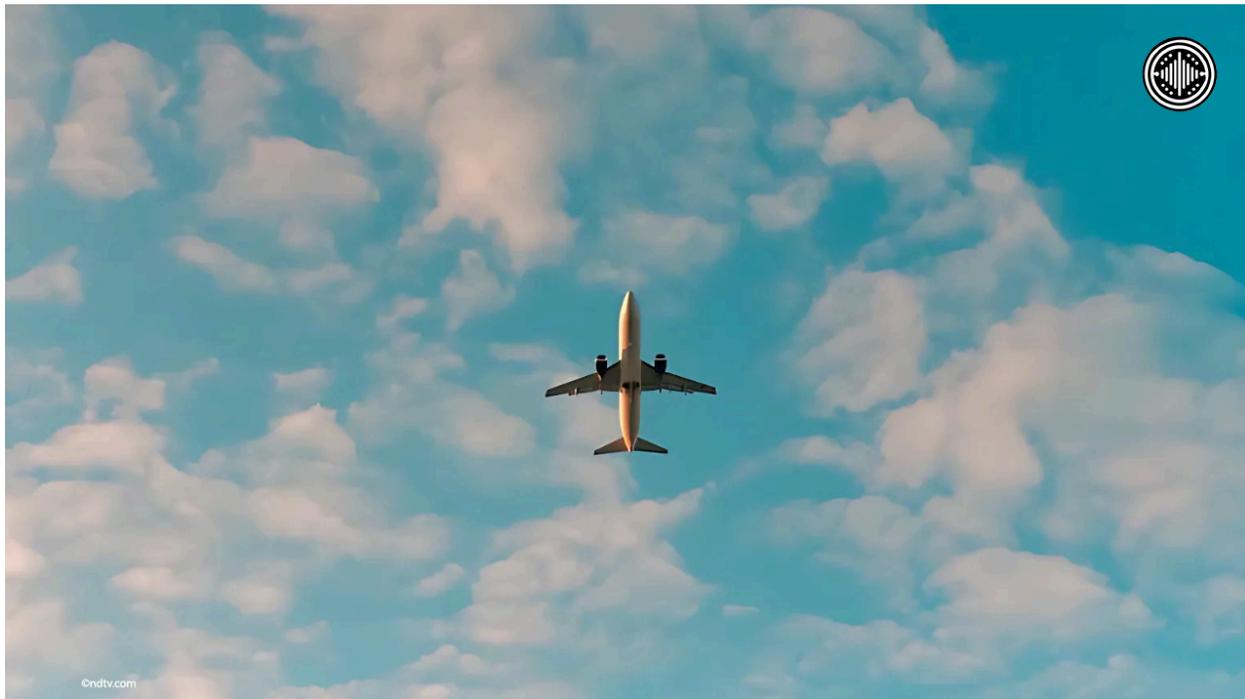


Beyond Borders: Pakistan's Airspace Extension Continues to Cost Indian Airlines



Pakistan has announced a further extension of its airspace closure for Indian-registered flights, prolonging the ban until August 24, 2025, at 5:19 AM (India time). This decision, conveyed through a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) issued by the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) on Friday, July 18, 2025, continues the restrictions that have been in place for nearly three months, significantly impacting Indian carriers and adding to operational costs.

The airspace closure, which initially commenced on April 24, 2025, was imposed by Pakistan in the aftermath of heightened tensions with India following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in Kashmir, which resulted in 26 fatalities. India's subsequent "Operation Sindoor" on May 7, targeting alleged terror infrastructure in Pakistan-administered territory, further escalated cross-border hostilities, leading to a reciprocal airspace closure by India on April 30 for Pakistani aircraft. These tit-for-tat restrictions have been extended multiple times since their initial implementation.

Under the extended ban, no aircraft operated by Indian airlines, or any military and civilian flights that are Indian-owned or leased, will be permitted to utilize Pakistani airspace. While Pakistan has not officially cited a new reason for this latest extension, it is understood to be a continuation of the measures enforced during the earlier escalation of tensions.

The prolonged airspace restrictions have presented considerable challenges for Indian airlines, particularly those operating westbound flights to destinations in the Middle East, Europe, and North America. Carriers are compelled to adopt longer, circuitous routes around Pakistan,

leading to increased flight times and a substantial rise in fuel consumption. This translates directly into higher operating costs for the airlines, which ultimately can impact ticket prices for passengers.

Conversely, while India's airspace remains closed to Pakistani aircraft, the impact on Pakistan's aviation sector is comparatively less severe. Pakistan's state-run airline, Pakistan International Airlines (PIA), has a limited number of eastbound routes that are affected. Experts have noted that Pakistan's aviation industry, being smaller in scale, experiences a lesser financial burden from India's reciprocal ban compared to the costs incurred by the larger Indian airline market.

As the ban continues, the lack of direct diplomatic breakthroughs on the underlying issues between the two nations suggests that air travel disruptions are likely to persist. The ongoing airspace restrictions serve as a tangible indicator of the strained relationship between India and Pakistan, with no immediate resolution in sight for the aviation sector.