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Pakistan Extends Airspace Restrictions on Indian Flights to August 23

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Pakistan has prolonged its airspace ban on Indian-registered aircraft until August 23, 2025, escalating tensions with India following the April 22 Pahalgam attack, as announced by the Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA). This extension, part of ongoing tit-for-tat measures, severely impacts Indian airlines while highlighting the deepening rift between the nuclear-armed neighbors.

The PAA issued a fresh Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) on July 18, 2025, barring all Indian-registered, operated, owned, or leased aircraft,

including military flights, from Pakistani airspace. Initially imposed on April 23 after India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, the ban reflects Pakistan's response to India's punitive measures following the Pahalgam terrorist attack in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), which killed 26 civilians. "The airspace closure is a necessary step amid India's aggressive posturing," a PAA official told Geo News, emphasizing Pakistan's stance against perceived Indian provocations. The restrictions, renewed monthly due to International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) rules, have disrupted Indian carriers like Air India, costing them an estimated \$600 million annually due to longer routes and fuel costs.

India reciprocated by extending its own airspace ban on Pakistani flights until July 24, 2025, further straining bilateral relations. The mutual closures stem from the Pahalgam attack, blamed on the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)-linked The Resistance Front (TRF), prompting India's Operation Sindoor airstrikes on May 7. Pakistan denies supporting terrorism, with Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Shafqat Ali Khan calling India's actions "a distraction from its Kashmir policies." The ceasefire on May 10 has not eased tensions, as both nations dig in, with Pakistan framing the ban as a defense of sovereignty.

The economic toll is significant, particularly for Indian airlines rerouting via China or Sri Lanka, while Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) faces lesser disruptions due to fewer routes over India. "Indian carriers are hemorrhaging money, but Pakistan's resolve is clear," noted aviation analyst Qaiser Nawab on X. The ongoing standoff, rooted in the volatile Kashmir dispute, risks further escalation, with both sides leveraging airspace bans as diplomatic weapons, leaving regional stability and aviation industries caught in the crossfire.