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Pakistan Air Force to Display JF-17 Thunder Jets at UK Airshow

July 18, 2025

— Categories: Defence & Security



The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) has landed in the United Kingdom to showcase its cutting-edge JF-17 Thunder Block-III fighter jets at the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) 2025, held from July 18 to 20 at Royal Air Force (RAF) Base Fairford. This prestigious event, one of the world's largest military airshows, offers Pakistan a global stage to demonstrate its aviation prowess. This article delves into the PAF's participation, the JF-17's advanced capabilities, and the significance of this display for Pakistan's defense industry.

The JF-17 Thunder Block-III, a 4.5-generation multi-role fighter jet co-developed by the Pakistan Aeronautical Complex (PAC) and China's Chengdu Aircraft Corporation (CAC), is a testament to Pakistan's growing self-reliance in defense technology. Equipped with an Active Electronically Scanned Array (AESA) radar and long-range Beyond-Visual-Range (BVR) missiles, it excels in diverse combat roles, from air-to-air engagements to precision strikes. "The JF-17 Block-III strengthens national security with its ability to tackle modern challenges," stated the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the military's media wing, highlighting its combat-proven record. The PAF's contingent, including two JF-17s from the No. 8 Squadron "Haiders" and a C-130 Hercules transport aircraft, arrived at RAF Fairford, supported by an IL-78 aerial refueling tanker, showcasing operational reach.

The PAF's participation in RIAT 2025, a 50-year-old airshow supporting the RAF Charitable Trust, underscores its commitment to professional excellence. The jets, one featuring a special paint scheme, will captivate aviation enthusiasts with static displays, drawing global attention after their role in recent regional conflicts. "There's palpable excitement in the UK for the JF-17's combat-proven capabilities," noted the ISPR, reflecting heightened interest post the May 2025 Pakistan-India skirmish. The successful mid-air refueling en route further demonstrated the PAF's logistical strength, a point of pride for Pakistan's defense community.

This showcase signals Pakistan's ambition to compete in the global defense market, with the JF-17 attracting interest from nations like Azerbaijan. Amid economic challenges, the PAF's display at RIAT reflects a bold commitment to innovation and sovereignty, contrasting with less assertive regional players. The event promises to elevate

Pakistan's stature, proving its military can punch above its weight on the world stage.