

□Pakistan's airspace closure disrupts Indian airlines amid escalating tensions□

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Dhaka: On April 24, 2025, Pakistan closed its airspace to all Indian aircraft, following a terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu, and Kashmir, that killed 26 people, mostly tourists. This closure, announced after a meeting of Pakistan's National Security Committee, is part of broader reciprocal measures amid escalating tensions with India.

Operational impact on Indian airlines

Major Indian carriers, including Air India, IndiGo, and SpiceJet, have been forced to reroute flights to Europe, North America, the UK, and the Middle East. These detours are increasing flight times by an average of two to three hours, leading to higher fuel consumption and operational costs.

For instance, flights from Delhi to Baku and Tbilisi are experiencing

duration increases of approximately 90 minutes, and the Delhi-Almaty service has been canceled entirely. Flights to the UAE from North India now require additional fuel due to longer flying times.

Approximately 70 to 80 two-way flights from India pass through Pakistani airspace daily, sometimes exceeding 100. The closure affects flights departing from major Indian cities, including Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Lucknow, Delhi, and Goa.

Passenger disruptions

The airspace closure has caused considerable inconvenience for travelers. IndiGo acknowledged that international flight schedules are impacted and stated that its teams are working to minimize inconvenience to customers.

The airline has promised to contact affected customers with alternate solutions and recommends checking the latest flight status on their website. Air India similarly expressed regret for the inconvenience caused to passengers.

Broader diplomatic context

The airspace closure is part of a series of retaliatory measures between India and Pakistan following the Pahalgam attack. India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty, closed the main land border crossing with Pakistan, downgraded diplomatic ties, and withdrew visas for Pakistanis.

In response, Pakistan expelled Indian diplomats, canceled visas for Indian nationals (with exceptions for Sikh pilgrims), and closed the Wagah border crossing in Punjab.

The situation mirrors a similar closure in 2019, which cost Indian carriers over INR 540 crore in five months.

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