Air Marshal Inderpal Singh Walia named Vice Chief of the Air Staff; takes over on 1 Nov

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News

The Ministry of Defence announced on 30 Oct 2026 that Air Marshal Inderpal Singh Walia will be the next Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS) of the Indian Air Force. He takes over on 1 Nov 2026 from Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit, who becomes the 29th Chief of the Air Staff on 31 Oct. He now heads the Eastern Air Command as Air Officer Commanding-in-Chief (AOC-in-C).

Key facts

Announced	Ministry of Defence, 30 Oct 2026; takes over 1 Nov 2026
Predecessor	Air Marshal Ashutosh Dixit – Chief of the Air Staff from 31 Oct
Present post	AOC-in-C, Eastern Air Command (since 1 Feb 2026); HQ Shillong
Commissioned	11 June 1988 – fighter stream; alumnus of the National Defence Academy (NDA)
Experience	Qualified on MiG-21, MiG-23, MiG-27, Jaguar, Su-30 MKI
Earlier posts	Commanded a frontline fighter squadron and TACDE; Defence Attaché to Japan & South Korea; SASO, Eastern Air Command

Awards	Vayu Sena Medal (2008), Ati Vishisht Seva Medal (2018)

Background

- IAF structure: HQ – Vayu Bhawan, New Delhi. Seven commands – five operational (Western – Delhi; Eastern – Shillong; Central – Prayagraj; South Western – Gandhinagar; Southern – Thiruvananthapuram), Training Command – Bengaluru, Maintenance Command – Nagpur. The VCAS is a principal staff officer at Air HQ.
- The National Defence Academy (NDA) is at Khadakwasla near Pune, Maharashtra – a joint-services academy that trains cadets of the Army, Navy and Air Force together.
- TACDE (Tactics and Air Combat Development Establishment) – started at Adampur (Punjab) on 1 Feb 1971; now at Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh). It trains the IAF's best fighter pilots in air-combat tactics.
- Gallantry: the highest wartime award is the Param Vir Chakra. The only IAF recipient – Flying Officer Nirmal Jit Singh Sekhon (1971 war, Srinagar, Gnat aircraft, posthumous). The Vayu Sena Medal is an IAF-specific medal for devotion to duty or courage.

Tamil Nadu link: the Air Force Administrative College is at Coimbatore. Sulur (Coimbatore) hosts Tejas squadrons; Thanjavur hosts No. 222 'Tigersharks' Su-30MKI squadron; there is also an Air Force Station at Tambaram, Chennai.

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