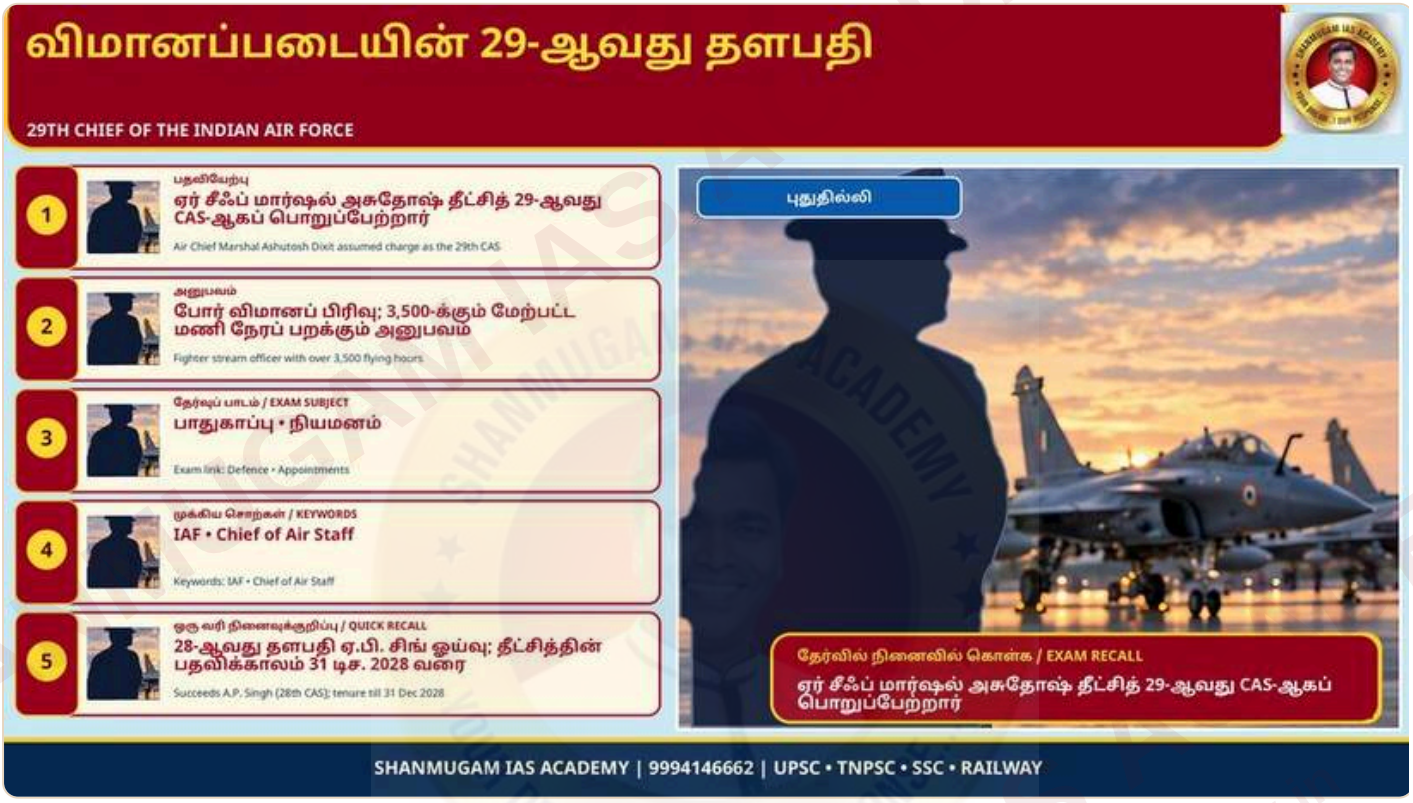
Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit takes charge as the 29th Chief of the Air Staff (31 Oct 2026)

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News

Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit took charge as the 29th Chief of the Air Staff (CAS) of the Indian Air Force in New Delhi on 31 October 2026. He succeeded Air Chief Marshal A.P. (Amar Preet) Singh, who retired after more than four decades of service; the Union Government had announced the appointment on 6 October. Commissioned into the fighter stream in December 1986, he was serving as Vice Chief of the Air Staff (VCAS) and earlier, during Operation Sindoor, as Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (CISC). He takes over at a time when the IAF has 29 fighter squadrons against a sanctioned 42.

Key facts

New chief	Air Chief Marshal Ashutosh Dixit – 29th CAS; 31 Oct 2026, New Delhi
Predecessor	Air Chief Marshal A.P. Singh – 28th CAS (30 Sep 2024 – 31 Oct 2026)
Commissioned	Fighter stream, 6 Dec 1986; alumnus of the National Defence Academy (NDA); born 9 Dec 1966, Lucknow
Flying	Over 3,500 hours on 20+ aircraft types (Mirage-2000, MiG variants, Jaguar, Kiran, IL-78, Hawk, Tejas); Experimental Test Pilot and Qualified Flying Instructor

Earlier posts	VCAS (from July 2026); CISC (HQ Integrated Defence Staff); AOC-in-C, Central Air Command; Deputy Chief of the Air Staff (DCAS)
Awards	PVSM, AVSM, VM, VSM
Tenure	3 years or age 62, whichever is earlier; up to 31 Dec 2028

Background – Indian Air Force

- The Indian Air Force was formed on 8 October 1932 (observed as Air Force Day). The prefix 'Royal' was added in 1945 and dropped on 26 Jan 1950. Motto: 'Nabha Sparsham Deeptam' (Bhagavad Gita, Chapter 11).
- First chief after Independence: Air Marshal Sir Thomas Elmhirst; first Indian chief: Air Marshal Subroto Mukerjee (1 Apr 1954). Arjan Singh, who led the IAF in the 1965 war, is the only 'Marshal of the Indian Air Force' (five-star rank, 2002).
- The President is the Supreme Commander of the armed forces. Service chiefs are selected by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC).
- Commands: 5 operational – Western (New Delhi), Eastern (Shillong), Central (Prayagraj), Southern (Thiruvananthapuram), South Western (Gandhinagar); 2 functional – Training (Bengaluru), Maintenance (Nagpur).
- Recent chiefs: 26th R.K.S. Bhadauria (2019–21), 27th V.R. Chaudhari (2021–24), 28th A.P. Singh (2024–26), 29th Ashutosh Dixit (from 2026).
- Challenges: only 29 of the sanctioned 42 fighter squadrons; delays in Tejas Mk1A deliveries; fifth-generation AMCA and Tejas Mk2 still years away; theaterisation (integrated tri-service commands).

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu link: Dixit helped complete the IOC and FOC (initial and final operational clearance) work for the Tejas fighter. Both Tejas squadrons – No. 45 'Flying Daggers' (from 2018) and No. 18 'Flying Bullets' (from 27 May 2020, with FOC Tejas) – operate from Air Force Station Sulur, near Coimbatore.

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