



VICE ADMIRAL AJAY KOCHHAR, PVSM, AVSM, NM, ASSUMES CHARGE AS THE 48TH VICE CHIEF OF THE NAVAL STAFF

Posted On: 29 MAY 2026 3:32PM by PIB Delhi

Vice Admiral Ajay Kochhar, PVSM, AVSM, NM, assumed charge as the 48th Vice Chief of the Naval Staff (VCNS) on **29 May 2026**. On assuming charge, the Flag Officer paid solemn homage to the Bravehearts who made the supreme sacrifice in service of the nation by laying a floral wreath at the National War Memorial, New Delhi.

An alumnus of the prestigious National Defence Academy, Pune, Vice Admiral Ajay Kochhar was commissioned into the Indian Navy on 01 Jul 1988. A specialist in **Gunnery and Missile Systems**, he has held a wide range of command, operational, and staff assignments over his distinguished naval career spanning more than 37 years.

He has commanded Indian Naval Ships *Nashak*, *Vibhuti*, and *Kirpan*, and was the Commissioning Commanding Officer of the frigate *Trikand*. The Flag Officer has also commanded the aircraft carrier **INS Vikramaditya**. During his tenure, the carrier successfully completed the integration and operationalisation of its air wing.

A graduate of the Defence Services Staff College, Wellington, the Naval War College, Goa, and the Royal College of Defence Studies, United Kingdom, the Flag Officer excelled in key strategic and policy-oriented staff roles at Naval Headquarters. These included Joint Director at Naval Plans, Director of Staff Requirements, and Principal Director DSCT.

On promotion to Flag Rank in 2018, he served as the Assistant Controller of Carrier Projects and Assistant Controller of Warship Production and Acquisition. **He subsequently commanded the Western Fleet in 2021 and thereafter served as Commandant, National Defence Academy**, where he contributed significantly towards the enhancement of training standards and infrastructure.

The Flag Officer assumed charge as Chief of Staff, Western Naval Command on 25 May 2024, amidst a challenging security situation in the Western Maritime Theatre. He spearheaded the Command's response to conventional and non-traditional threats along the Western Seaboard, including high-tempo naval operations during Operation Sindoor. For his exceptional leadership and meritorious service of a very high order, he was awarded the **Ati Vishisht Seva Medal in 2022 and the Param Vishisht Seva Medal in 2026**.

Prior to taking over as the Vice Chief of the Naval Staff, he served as Commander-in-Chief, Andaman and Nicobar Command, where he played a key role in operational coordination and in enhancing integration and jointness among the three Services.

Vice Admiral Ajay Kochhar is married to Mrs Reyman, an artist who has worked in the fields of advertising and education. The couple is blessed with two children. Their daughter, Sabah, works as a freelance journalist, and their son, Karan, is employed at a financial consultancy firm.





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