Indian Air Force ranks 3rd most powerful air force in world

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Why in News?

Recently, The Indian Air Force (IAF) retains 3rd place among independent air forces and 6th overall (including all military air branches) in the WDMMA 2026 Global Air Power Rankings.

WDMMA – TVR System

- World Directory of Modern Military Aircraft (WDMMA) Ranking Method uses the True Value Rating (TVR).
- It evaluates aircraft mix, technology, logistics, modernization, and operational capability rather than sheer numbers.
- **Fighting Strength –** Number of aircrafts active and capability of them.
- **Fleet Quality –** Mix of old planes versus newer, advanced, and special-mission aircraft.
- **Support –** Performance the forces can maintain, train, and deploy for attack or defence.

  US Air Force and Russian Air Force rank higher as independent air arms.

- **Significance –** India's ranking highlights its balanced capability, modernization efforts, and global operational readiness, not just fleet size.

Military Air Arm	Aircraft	TvR	Global Rank
United States Air Force	5,004	242.9	1
United States Navy	2,504	142.4	2
Russian Air Force	3,677	114.2	3
United States Army	4,333	112.6	4
United States Marines	1,211	85.3	5
Indian Air Force	1,716	69.4	6

Military Air Arm	Aircraft	TvR	Global Rank
Chinese Air Force (PLAAF)	3,733	63.8	7
Japan	756	58.1	8
Israel Air Force	581	56.3	9
French Air Force	511	55.3	10

Quick Facts

• **Ranked 3rd –** In comparison with individual Air Forces against each other, the Indian Air Force (IAF) is 3rd in the world, behind US and Russia.
• **Ranked 6th –** In comparison with all military air branches combined (including the separate US Navy, US Army, and US Marines), the IAF ranks 6th overall.

Reference

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