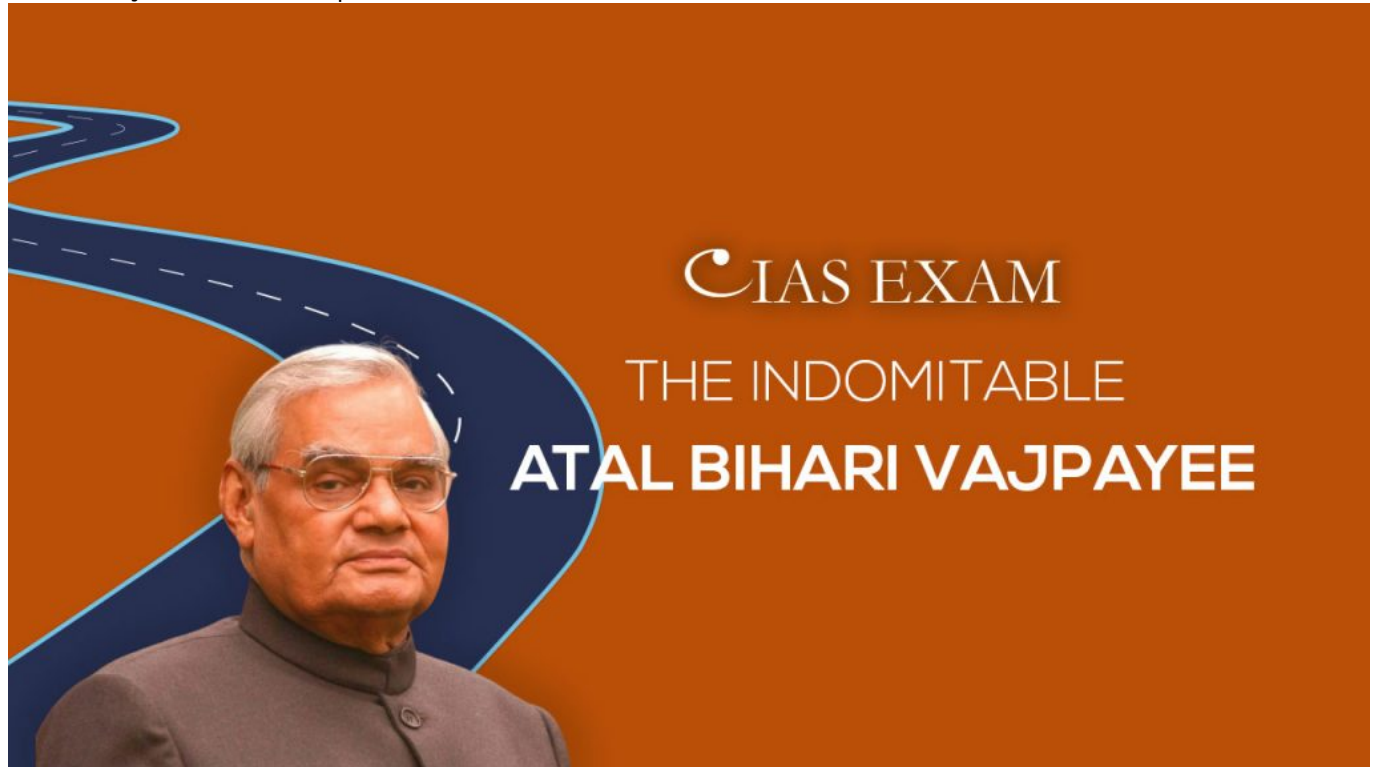


# The Indomitable Atal Bihari Vajpayee

written by iasexam.com | 25/12/2019



## **Some of the important events with Vajpayee at helm**

### **Pokhran Nuclear Tests**

In May 1998, India conducted five underground nuclear tests in the Pokhran desert in Rajasthan, 24 years after its first nuclear test (Smiling Buddha) in 1974. The nuclear tests were popular domestically. In effect, the international sanctions imposed failed to sway India from weaponising its nuclear capability.

### **Lahore Summit**

In late 1998 and early 1999, Vajpayee began a push for a full-scale diplomatic peace process with Pakistan. With the historic inauguration of the Delhi-Lahore bus service in February 1999, Vajpayee initiated a new peace process aimed towards permanently resolving the Kashmir dispute and other conflicts with Pakistan.

### **AIADMK-Coalition Crisis**

The Vajpayee-led government was faced with two crises in

mid-1999. The AIADMK had continually threatened to withdraw from the coalition and national leaders repeatedly flew down from Delhi to Chennai to pacify the AIADMK chief J. Jayalalitha. However, in May 1999, the AIADMK did pull the plug on the NDA, and the Vajpayee administration was reduced to a caretaker status pending fresh elections scheduled for October 1999.

## **Kargil War**

The intended intrusion by troops of regular Pakistan army on the high ranges of Kargil, Batalik and Akhnoor in May 1999 resulted in a ferocious battle between the armies of both countries which eventually culminated into the Indian army gaining back its lost territories and Operation Vijay was a complete success.

## **Indian**

### **Airlines flight IC 814 Hijack**

Indian Airlines flight IC 814 from Kathmandu to New Delhi was hijacked by five terrorists and flown to Taliban-ruled Afghanistan in December 1999. The hijackers made several demands including the release of certain terrorists like Masood Azhar from prison. Under extreme pressure, the government ultimately caved in. Jaswant Singh, the Minister of External Affairs at the time, flew with the terrorists to Afghanistan and exchanged them for the passengers.

## **US**

### **President Visit to India**

In March 2000, Bill Clinton, the President of the United States, paid a state visit to India. This was the first state visit to India by a U.S. President in 22 years since President Jimmy Carter's visit in 1978. President Clinton's visit was hailed as a significant milestone in relations between the two nations.

## **2001**

### **Parliament Attack**

On 13 December 2001, a group of masked, armed men with fake IDs stormed the Parliament House in Delhi. The terrorists managed to kill several security guards, but the building was sealed off swiftly and security forces cornered and killed the men who were later proven to be Pakistan nationals.

### **2002 Gujarat violence**

In February 2002, a train filled with Hindu pilgrims returning to Gujarat from Ayodhya stopped in the town of Godhra. A scuffle broke out between Hindu activists and Muslim residents, and amidst uncertain circumstance, the train was set on fire leading to the deaths of 59 people. The charred bodies of the victims were displayed in public in the city of Ahmedabad, and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad called for a statewide strike in Gujarat. These decisions stoked anti-Muslim sentiments. Blaming Muslims for the

deaths, rampaging Hindu mobs killed thousands of Muslim men and women, destroying Muslim homes and places of worship. The violence raged for more than two months, and more than 1,000 people died.

### **Economic reforms 2002-04**

In late 2002 and 2003 the government pushed through economic reforms. The country's GDP growth exceeded 7% every year from 2003 to 2007, following three years of sub-5% growth. Increasing foreign investment, modernization of public and industrial infrastructure, the creation of jobs, a rising high-tech and IT industry and urban modernization and expansion improved the nation's international image. Good crop harvests and strong industrial expansion also helped the economy.