



**Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Policy Research & International Studies,  
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda**



**National Seminar**

**LEGACY OF SHRI ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE:  
CENTENNIAL REFLECTIONS ON LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE  
AND FOREIGN POLICY**

Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay Auditorium, MSU

13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> March, 2026

In association with  
**Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC),  
The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda**

## ~ Concept Note ~

### **Background to the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Policy Research and International Studies**

The Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Policy Research and International Studies (AIPRIS) was established at The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda to promote advanced research, teaching, and public engagement in the fields of public policy, governance, diplomacy, and strategic studies. The Institute seeks to function as a vibrant platform that bridges academic scholarship with policy practice by encouraging interdisciplinary dialogue among scholars, diplomats, administrators, and civil society stakeholders.

Named after Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee—statesman, parliamentarian, poet, and Prime Minister—the Institute is committed to nurturing informed debate on India's developmental trajectory and its evolving role in global affairs. AIPRIS promotes evidence-based policy research, leadership studies, and comparative governance models while encouraging young researchers to engage with contemporary national and international challenges. Through seminars, publications, capacity-building programmes, and collaborative research projects, the Institute endeavours to preserve and disseminate the intellectual and political legacy of Shri Vajpayee, whose commitment to democratic values, inclusive development, and principled foreign policy continues to guide India's public life.

### **Significance of the Commemoration of the Centenary**

The year 2025-2026 marks the birth centenary of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, one of the most influential leaders of modern India. Such commemoration of his centenary is not merely an act of remembrance but also an opportunity for critical reflection on the enduring relevance of his ideas in the twenty-first century.

Shri Vajpayee's public life symbolised rare qualities—efforts to build democratic consensus, political moderation, respect for institutions, and a humanistic approach to governance. His tenure as Prime Minister witnessed decisive initiatives in infrastructure, economic reforms, national security, and diplomatic outreach. Equally significant was his ability to rise above partisan divides and articulate a vision of India rooted in civilizational confidence and constitutional morality.

The centenary provides a historic moment to:

- Revisit his contribution to strengthening parliamentary democracy;
- Assess policy innovations initiated under his leadership;
- Examine the evolution of India's foreign policy doctrine;
- Inspire future generations with values of dialogue, dignity, and nation-building.

A national seminar dedicated to these themes will contribute to academic scholarship while informing contemporary policy debates.

## Thematic Background to the National Seminar

The proposed national seminar aims to conduct a comprehensive, scholarly appraisal of Shri Vajpayee's legacy through three interrelated lenses—Leadership, Governance, and Foreign Policy. These dimensions collectively shaped his statesmanship and India's transformation at the turn of the millennium. This seminar aspires to celebrate the memory of Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee through critical inquiry and constructive dialogue, reaffirming his message that democracy, development, and diplomacy must ultimately serve the dignity of every Indian.

- **Leadership:** Vajpayee's leadership style combined ideological conviction with democratic accommodation. His ability to communicate across political boundaries, respect dissent, and build coalitions offers valuable lessons for contemporary politics.
- **Governance:** The Vajpayee years were marked by path-breaking initiatives such as the National Highways Development Project, telecom revolution, economic liberalisation with a human face, and institutional reforms. Evaluating these policies provides insights into developmental governance.
- **Foreign Policy:** From nuclear tests at Pokhran to the Lahore peace initiative, and from Look East policy to strategic partnership with major powers, his diplomacy redefined India's global posture.

The seminar will bring together historians, political scientists, diplomats, administrators, media practitioners, and young researchers to generate nuanced perspectives on these themes.

### Sub-Themes:

#### A. Leadership

1. Democratic ethos and coalition politics
2. Parliamentary record and political communication
3. Ethics in public life, moderation, and consensus building
4. Vajpayee as poet-statesman: culture and politics
5. Crisis leadership and national security decision-making
6. Comparative perspectives on leadership in India
7. Role in strengthening the party system and federalism
8. Leadership lessons for contemporary India

#### B. Governance

1. Economic reforms and inclusive development
2. Infrastructure initiatives: highways, telecom and power sector reforms
3. Education, health, and social sector policies
4. Federal relations and cooperative governance
5. Administrative reforms and institution building
6. Good governance, transparency, and citizen welfare

7. Technology and digital transformation beginnings
8. Environmental policy and sustainable development
9. Legacy of flagship programmes and their long-term impact

### **C. Foreign Policy**

1. Nuclear policy and strategic autonomy
2. India–Pakistan relations: Lahore to Agra
3. Look East Policy and Asian connectivity
4. Relations with major powers: USA, Russia, China, EU
5. Multilateralism and India at the UN
6. Energy diplomacy and maritime strategy
7. Diaspora engagement
8. Counter-terrorism and national security doctrine
9. Continuities and changes in post-Vajpayee diplomacy

Papers may address these themes or any related issues consistent with the seminar's overall focus.

### **Expected Outcomes**

- Creation of an interdisciplinary body of scholarship on Shri Vajpayee's legacy;
- Policy-relevant recommendations for contemporary governance and diplomacy;
- Engagement between academia and practitioners;
- Encouragement to young scholars to study India's political history with rigor.

### **Prof. Amit Dholakia**

Director

**Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Policy Research and International Studies**

**The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda**

**Vadodara – Gujarat**

Mobile: +91 9978962724 | Email: [director-aipris@msubaroda.ac.in](mailto:director-aipris@msubaroda.ac.in)

