

# Mahmoud Ahmadinejad factfile

**Known for his simple attire and unpolished style, 49-year-old Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is the meteor of Iranian politics, rising from provincial governor to mayor of the capital and now to president – all in two years**

► **1956:** Born Garmsar, southeast of Tehran. One of seven children, son of a blacksmith

► **1976:** Enters Tehran's University of Science and Technology to study civil engineering

► **1979:** Member of radical student group that spawns **Islamic Revolution** and seizure of American embassy in Tehran. **More than fifty U.S. diplomats held hostage for fifteen months**

► **1980-88: Iran-Iraq War**

► **1986:** Gains PhD. Joins **Islamic Revolutionary Guards** – takes part in covert operations inside Iraq

► **1988-97:** Serves as governor of three provinces and rises to Vice Minister of **Culture and Islamic Guidance**. Fiercely loyal to Supreme Leader **Ayatollah Ali Khamenei**, who has final say in matters of state



► **2003:** Backed by hardliners in clerical regime, Ahmadinejad is elected **Mayor of Tehran**. Reverses many reformist changes put into effect by previous moderate mayors and cracks down on dissent in the press. **Extols moral “purity” – seen as champion of the poor**

► **2005:** During presidential campaign Ahmadinejad calls for return to principles of Islamic Revolution,

redistribution of oil and gas riches, and urgent reduction of 30% unemployment rate. **Criticises Iran's current negotiators for making too many concessions to Europe and U.S. – particularly freezing uranium enrichment programme**

► **June 24:** Wins presidential election run-off with 62.2% of vote over moderate rival Ayatollah Hashemi Rafsanjani with 35.3%