

WORLD AGENDA

DECEMBER 2006



4 Dec 8-10, **New York:** More than 1,000 married Catholic priests gather to challenge the Vatican's stand on celibacy. The protest is led by Zambia's Archbishop **Emmanuel Milingo**, excommunicated in October after ordaining other married priests

1 Dec 3, **Caracas:** **Hugo Chavez**, one of Latin America's most powerful leaders and an outspoken critic of Washington, is expected to win a landslide victory in Venezuela's presidential poll. The firebrand leftist's social programmes have brought cheap food and free medical care into the barrios



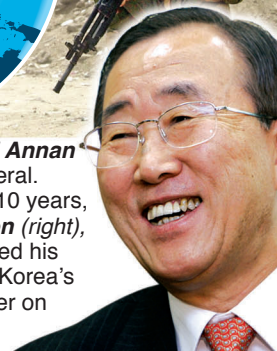
2 Dec 7, **Cape Canaveral:** **NASA** launches the shuttle **Discovery** to the **International Space Station** in the hardest and most complex mission to date. Astronauts must deliver a cargo module and perform three space walks to attach a new section to the P4 solar array



3 Dec 31, **Iraq:** International support for the U.S.-led coalition will wane further with the planned withdrawal of Italian and Polish troops



5 Dec 31, **United Nations:** **Kofi Annan** steps down as UN Secretary-General. Annan, who has held the post for 10 years, will be succeeded by **Ban Ki-moon** (right), who relinquished his post as South Korea's Foreign Minister on November 1



6 Dec 11, **Beijing:** New rules opening up China's banking sector to the international market will allow foreign banks to tap into the republic's \$2 trillion of household savings



7 Dec 8, **Hollywood:** The film **Blood Diamond**, starring **Leonardo DiCaprio** and **Djimon Hounsou**, will focus world attention on the \$23m illicit gem trade. Black market diamonds, mainly from **Ivory Coast**, are responsible for fuelling civil wars in the region

8 **Thailand:** **Chuang Chuang**, a six-year-old male panda, will be played "porn" videos to encourage him to mate with five-year-old female **Lin Hui**. The pair have lived together at **Chiang Mai** zoo since 2003 but failed to breed

