

# 2006 THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

## January



**4** Israeli Prime Minister **Ariel Sharon** suffered a massive stroke

**15/22** **Michelle Bachelet** was elected as the first female president of

Chile, while in Bolivia **Evo Morales** was sworn in as the first indigenous head of state

**25** **Hamas**, the militant Islamist party, won a landslide victory in the Palestinian election



## February



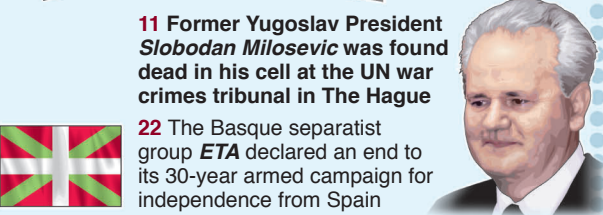
**3** Violence spread in Islamic countries in response to publication in a Danish newspaper of cartoons depicting the Prophet Muhammad

**10** The Winter Olympics began in Torino, Italy. Germany headed the final medal table

## March



**10** **NASA's Mars Reconnaissance Orbiter** entered orbit around the red planet to look for evidence of water and identify landing sites for future missions



**11** Former Yugoslav President **Slobodan Milosevic** was found dead in his cell at the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague



**22** The Basque separatist group **ETA** declared an end to its 30-year armed campaign for independence from Spain

**28** **Kadima**, the party founded by Ariel Sharon but now led by Ehud Olmert, won Israel's election

## April



**5** Amnesty International claimed it had further evidence that secret CIA flights carried terror suspects for interrogation in "black site" prisons in eastern Europe

**9** Centre-left economist **Romano Prodi** won power in Italy by a razor-thin margin

**21** **Queen Elizabeth II** celebrated her 80th birthday



## May



**17** *The Da Vinci Code*, the movie of the blockbuster novel which has sold over 43 million copies worldwide, premiered at the Cannes Film Festival

**20** Construction of the **Three Gorges Dam** in China, the world's largest hydroelectric project, was completed nine months ahead of schedule

**21** Montenegro voted in a referendum to terminate its union with Serbia

## June



**7** **Abu Musab al-Zarqawi**, al-Qaeda leader in Iraq, was killed in a U.S. airstrike on an isolated safe house near Baquba

**9** The **FIFA World Cup** in Germany got underway, with Italy emerging as the eventual winner

**9** **King Bhumibol** of Thailand, the world's longest-serving head of state, marked the 60th anniversary of his accession



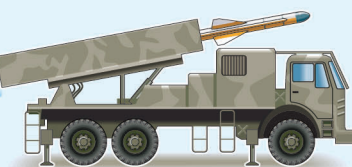
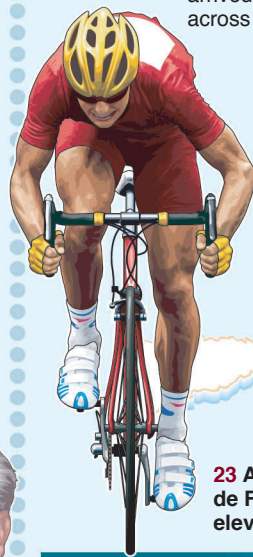
## July



**3** The first train from Beijing to Tibet arrived in Lhasa after a 48-hour journey across the world's highest railway

**11** Seven coordinated bombings on packed rush-hour commuter trains in India's financial capital, Mumbai, killed 209 people

**12** Israel bombarded Lebanon from land, sea and air after Hezbollah forces killed eight soldiers and captured two more. The war lasted a month, with significant casualties on both sides



**23** American **Floyd Landis** won the Tour de France, but then tested positive for elevated levels of testosterone

## August

**1** Cuban dictator **Fidel Castro** underwent intestinal surgery, having temporarily transferred power to his brother **Raul**

**9** Airline passengers were banned from carrying all but essential hand luggage after anti-terrorist officers uncovered a plot to blow up planes flying from Britain to the U.S.



**28** Tennis greats **Andre Agassi** and **Martina Navratilova** took their final bows at the U.S. Open in New York

## September



**4** Ebullient Australian naturalist **Steve Irwin** was killed by a stingray barb to the heart during a diving expedition on the Great Barrier Reef

**19** Thai Prime Minister **Thaksin Shinawatra** was ousted in a bloodless military coup

**22** Europe scored a stunning victory over the U.S. at the 36th **Ryder Cup**, held for the first time in Ireland



## October



**5** NATO assumed responsibility for security across all of Afghanistan, where conflict deaths rose four-fold over the year

**9** South Korean Foreign Minister **Ban Ki-moon** was chosen to be the next UN Secretary-General



**9** North Korea conducted an underground nuclear test, attracting widespread international condemnation



## November



**5** Former Iraqi President **Saddam Hussein** was sentenced to death over the 1982 Dujail killings. He remained on trial for the genocide of thousands of Kurds



**7** President **Bush** suffered a thumping defeat in the crucial U.S. mid-term elections, with Democrats winning control of both Houses of Congress



**21** **Pierre Gemayel**, a leading anti-Syrian Lebanese cabinet minister, was assassinated in Beirut

**23** Former KGB spy **Alexander Litvinenko** died in London from radiation poisoning by polonium-210



## December



**1** **Typhoon Durian** killed over 1,000 people in the Philippines and up to 100 in Vietnam

**5** A military coup was declared in Fiji

**10** Chile's former military dictator General **Augusto Pinochet** died at 91

