

2009: The year ahead



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Feb 2, Caracas: Venezuelan President **Hugo Chavez** marks 10 years in office



1 January: Barack Obama is sworn in as America's 44th – and first black – president

2 February: Late Australian actor **Heath Ledger** is tipped to become the second ever posthumous Oscar winner. The star, who died aged 28, is favourite to win Best Supporting Actor for his role in *The Dark Knight*



3 March: Barbie, one of the world's best-selling and most controversial dolls, turns 50. California-based Mattel has sold one billion of the adult-bodied dolls in more than 150 countries



Jan 28: Davos, Switzerland: Political and business leaders attempt to find solutions to the global recession at the **World Economic Forum**

Jul, Sudan: First democratic election in more than 20 years is scheduled after 2005 peace deal ended over two decades of civil war



4 April: G20 countries try to find a way out of the world economic crisis at a meeting in London hosted by Prime Minister **Gordon Brown**. The summit will be U.S. President Obama's first visit to Europe



5 Jacob Zuma (above) is widely expected to become South Africa's new president when the country goes to the polls in a general election. The **African National Congress** leader has been dogged by corruption charges

6 May: A general election in India is due, giving the world's most populous democracy the opportunity to pass judgement on the Congress-led coalition government's response to the **Mumbai Massacre**

Oct 3-5, Copenhagen: The **International Olympic Committee** votes on the inclusion of the existing 26 sports, plus two new ones, in the 2016 Olympic Games

Jun 30, Iraq: U.S. forces are required to leave Iraqi cities, towns and villages

Mar 20, Angola: Pope Benedict XVI begins four-day visit to celebrate 500 years of evangelization in the first sub-Saharan African country reached by Catholic missionaries



8 Iran's former reformist president **Mohammad Khatami** (left) may run against President **Mahmoud Ahmadinejad** at a crucial time in Iran's nuclear dispute with the West

9 July: Former President **Megawati Sukarnoputri** will stand against incumbent **Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono** in elections for Indonesia's top job

10 August: The mandate of the UN-backed interim Somali government expires with little hope of an effective replacement

11 September: Two former **Bear Stearns** hedge fund managers are due to go on trial in the highest profile criminal prosecution to date stemming from the U.S. mortgage market meltdown. **Ralph Cioffi** and **Matthew Tannin** are charged with defrauding investors

12 October: Asterix the Gaul, the French comic-book hero, turns 50. His 33 books have sold more than 325m copies worldwide



13 November: Massive celebrations are planned for the 20th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall

14 December: Copenhagen hosts a crunch climate change conference at which it is hoped an agreement to succeed the **Kyoto Protocol** will be approved