

Chavez in second bid for extended rule

Venezuelans are to vote in a new referendum on Hugo Chavez's plan to scrap term limits, allowing him to stay in office indefinitely as long as he wins elections. Chavez has been in power for 10 years and says he wants to rule the oil-exporting South American country for at least another decade



KEY EVENTS IN CHAVEZ'S PRESIDENCY

- **1998:** Chavez elected president with 56% of vote, inaugurated Feb 99
- **1999-2001:** Uses groundswell of support to pass new constitution that boosts executive power
- **2002-03:** Following months of protests, Chavez survives military coup and two-month national strike that cripples oil industry
- **2003:** Starts massive social spending campaign offering education, health and low-cost food to poor majority
- **2004:** Wins opposition-led recall referendum with 58% of vote
- **2005:** Signs decree on land reform aimed at eliminating large estates
- **2006:** Wins third term as president with 63% of vote
- **2007:** Announces nationalizations in electricity and telecom sectors
Suffers first defeat at ballot box when referendum on proposals to extend his powers is narrowly rejected
- **2008:** Signs oil and gas cooperation accord with Russia and discusses developing civilian nuclear programme
- **2009, Feb 15:** Venezuelans to vote for second time on proposal to scrap rules barring him from re-election