

Changing political map of Latin America

Michelle Bachelet, candidate of the ruling centre-left Coalition for Democracy party, has become Chile's first ever woman president. Victim of torture during the 1973-90 dictatorship of General Augusto Pinochet, Bachelet's win marks the latest shift to the political left in Latin America

1 Venezuela, Dec 2005:

President **Hugo Chavez**, fierce left-wing critic of the United States, tightens his hold on power with sweeping victory in congressional elections.

Chavez enjoys close ties with Cuba and Iran

2 Bolivia, Jan 22, 2006:

Left-wing former coca leaf farmer, **Evo Morales**, takes office as country's first indigenous president. **Morales vows to be a nightmare for the U.S.**

3 Honduras, Jan 27: Jose Manuel Zelaya of centre-right Liberal Party takes office as president

4 Haiti, Feb: Former president Rene Preval is leading opinion polls ahead of presidential election, pledging to bridge gap between rich and poor in the Americas' poorest nation

5 Costa Rica, Feb: Former President Oscar Arias – who served from 1986 to 1990 – is hoping to return to power with his National Liberation Party and end rule of the Social Christian Unity Party. Economic slowdown, poverty and inefficiencies in public sector are focal points of his campaign

6 El Salvador, Mar:

Conservative Nationalist **Republican Alliance (ARENA)** is most popular party in forthcoming presidential election

7 Peru, Apr: Moderate conservative Lourdes Flores is front-runner to replace unpopular President Alejandro Toledo in legislative polls

8 Colombia, May: U.S.-backed, right-wing President Alvaro Uribe is on course to win second term

9 Mexico, Jul: Leftist presidential candidate Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador leads opinion polls ahead of conservative Felipe Calderon

10 Brazil, Oct: President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva looks vulnerable following corruption scandals involving his Workers' Party. Lula's main rival is Jose Serra of centrist Social Democratic Party

11 Ecuador, Oct: Socialist Leon Roldos Aguilera has slight lead in opinion polls to replace interim-President Alfredo Palacio

12 Nicaragua, Nov: Left-wing Sandinista leader Daniel Ortega plans to run for president for fourth time



Bachelet, 54, former health and defence minister

