



## East Timor

### Why in News?

Recently, **East Timor, also known as Timor Leste, Asia's Youngest Democracy**, held the second and final round of its presidential election.



### What are Key Facts about East Timor?

#### ▪ History:

- The territory was **colonised by Portugal in the 18<sup>th</sup> century** and remained under its control until 1975.
- When the **Portuguese withdrew**, troops from Indonesia invaded and annexed East Timor as its 27<sup>th</sup> province.
  - A long and bloody struggle for independence ensued, during which at least

1,00,000 people died.

- In a **1999 UN-supervised referendum**, the East Timorese voted for independence, but that unleashed even more violence until peace-keeping forces were allowed to enter.
  - The country was **officially recognised by the [United Nations \(UN\)](#) in 2002.**
- East Timor has applied to be a member of the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations \(ASEAN\)](#).
  - It currently holds observer status.

#### ▪ **Geography:**

- East Timor is **bounded by the Timor Sea** to the southeast, the Wetar Strait to the north, the Ombai Strait to the northwest, and western Timor (part of the Indonesian province of East Nusa Tenggara) to the southwest.
- East Timor **comprises the eastern half of Timor island**, the western half of which is part of Indonesia.
- It spans a **15,000 square km land area** – slightly smaller than Israel – and it's 1.3 million people are predominantly Roman Catholic.

## What about the Economy and Political System?

#### ▪ **Politics:**

- In nearly 20 years since independence, **East Timor's presidential and parliamentary elections have been dominated** by many of the same faces.
- In the political system, the president also **shares some executive powers** and **appoints a government** and has the power to veto ministers or dissolve parliament.

#### ▪ **Economy:**

- The territory **depends on revenues from its offshore oil and gas reserves** which account for 90% of its [Gross Domestic Product \(GDP\)](#).
- It has an **agreement with Australia to split revenue** from the Greater Sunrise gas field, Australia which is worth an estimated USD65 billion.
- The **Bayu Undan gas field**, its main revenue stream, is **set to dry up by 2023** and the country is now planning to collaborate with companies in Australia to turn it into carbon capture facilities.

[Source: IE](#)

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