

East Timor

April 21, 2022

In news– The second and final round of its presidential election was held in East Timor recently.

East Timor: Country profile-

- **East Timor, also known as Timor Leste** comprises the eastern half of Timor island, the western half of which is part of Indonesia.
- Australia is the country's southern neighbour, separated by the Timor Sea and Dili is its capital.
- It spans a 15,000 square km (5,792 square mile) land area – slightly smaller than Israel.



- It is **one of only two predominantly Catholic nations in Southeast Asia, the other being the Philippines**, as well as the **only country in Asia to be located completely in the Southern Hemisphere**.
- Most of the people are of Papuan, Malayan, and Polynesian origin and are predominantly Christian.
- About 40 different Papuan and Malayan languages or dialects are spoken, dominated by Tetum.
- Portuguese is spoken by a small fraction of the population, but it is one of the country's two official

languages, the other being Tetum; Indonesian and English are considered to be “working” languages.

- It **was colonised by Portugal in the 18th century** and remained under its control until 1975.
- When the Portuguese withdrew, troops from **Indonesia invaded and annexed East Timor as its 27th province.**
- **The East Timorese voted for independence in a 1999 UN-supervised referendum,** but that unleashed even more violence until peace-keeping forces were allowed to enter.
- The country was **officially recognised by the United Nations in 2002.**
- It has also **applied to be a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** and currently holds observer status.
- **In East Timor’s political system, the president also shares some executive powers** and appoints a government and has the power to veto ministers or dissolve parliament.
- **The country depends on revenues from its offshore oil and gas reserves** which account for 90% of its gross domestic product.
- Its main revenue stream, the **Bayu Undan gas field,** is set to dry up by 2023 and the country is now planning to collaborate with companies like Australia’s Santos to turn it into carbon capture facilities.