

Six former E. Timor officers acquitted

JAKARTA, Aug. 15. Indonesian courts on Thursday acquitted a general and five other officers accused of grave human rights violations when East Timor voted for independence in 1999.

The verdict outraged human rights groups, who have long feared that most of those who unleashed bloody mayhem across the half-island state would go unpunished, despite Indonesia's promises to the international community that justice will be done.

Concerned that future prosecutions against 11 other Indonesian officials would also collapse, some demanded the United Nations set up an independent war crimes tribunal.

Military and police officers along with families and friends cheered and hugged Thursday's defendants when the "not guilty" verdicts were read.

One court cleared Brig. Gen. Timbul Silaen — Indonesia's last police chief in East Timor — of charges that he allowed his men to take part in atrocities or did nothing to stop a rampage by paramilitary gangs who opposed independence from In-



The former Kovalima district head in East Timor, Herman Sedyono, is overcome with emotion as he is embraced by his wife, after being acquitted at a court in Jakarta on Thursday. — AP

donesia. Later, another court acquitted a group of two active colonels and two majors in the army and police force, along with a retired army colonel.

"The defendants have not been proven guilty and therefore should be acquitted of all charges," said Judge Cicut Sutarso.

He said there was "no evidence" they had conspired with the gangs who ended the violence when a multinational peacekeeping force arrived.

All had been charged with allowing men under their command to commit atrocities, which included rape, murder and driving hundreds of thousands of people from their homes. — AP

THE HINDU

16 AUG 2002

EAST TIMOR / VERDICT A SHAM, SAY RIGHTS GROUPS

Ex-Governor convicted of massacres

JAKARTA, AUG. 14. In the first verdict in a series of unprecedented war crimes trials, Indonesia's last Governor of East Timor was convicted and sentenced to three years in prison for doing nothing to stop massacres when the tiny territory voted for independence in 1999.

Abilio Soares punched his fist into the air as the decision was announced on Wednesday. He angrily declared he would appeal. Prosecutors, too, said they would launch a legal challenge to what they and rights activists described as a too-lenient sentence that could serve as a template for pending cases, some involving Indonesian military and police generals.

"I've been made a scapegoat," Mr. Soares told reporters. "How can I, one person, disband a militia which is armed with spears, axes and guns?" The verdict was delivered by a human rights court trying 18 former officials, army officers and police commanders charged with crimes against humanity. They have been accused of orchestrating the violence and mayhem that shook East Timor before and after a U.N.-sponsored independence referendum three years ago.

Human rights groups have called the trials a whitewash — and Mr. Soares' three-year sentence was likely to do little to dispel that impression.

"This shows that Indonesia is not serious about justice for what happened in East Timor," said Rosentino Amaduhei of Yayasan Hak, East Timor's leading human rights organisation. Speaking in the East Tim-

orese capital of Dili, he said a three-year sentence was ridiculous, adding that individual militiamen had been sentenced to 20 years in jail in East Timor for a single murder. "The verdict is irrelevant as the process from the beginning was deeply, deeply flawed," said Sidney Jones from the Brussels-based think tank International Crisis Group. "By no stretch of the imagination can you say justice has been achieved."

Mr. Soares was Indonesia's Governor of East Timor during the U.N.-organised plebiscite. He is only one of three Timorese among the 18 defendants, who include the Indonesian military and police command-



Former Indonesian Governor of East Timor, Abilio Soares, sits in the dock during his trial at a court in Jakarta on Wednesday. — AP

ers of the province at the time. Judge Emmy Murni Mustafa said the defendant had "failed to prevent his men from committing grave human rights violations." She said Mr. Soares was given a lighter sentence than the 10 1/2 years requested by the prosecution because of a request for leniency from the East Timorese President, Xanana Gusmao. "The letter shows a spirit of reconciliation, which could have been buried by a heavy sentence," Ms. Mustafa said.

The ad hoc human rights court was established last year in response to intense international pressure for Jakarta to bring to justice those responsible for the bloodshed. The trials — part of out since March in cramped and sweltering courtrooms — have been fraught with shortcomings, critics say. The indictments play down the role of the military, which the United Nations has blamed for the violence.

But Ms. Mustafa echoed the government position, saying both sides were to blame. "The clashes which occurred were started by both the pro-independence and anti-independence groups so therefore both sides must share the responsibility for the violence," she said.

If the trials of three army and police generals result in convictions, it would be the first time high-ranking Indonesian military commanders have been punished for decades of abuses in East Timor and elsewhere in the country. Hundreds were killed in the lead-up to the August 1999 referendum that saw the overwhelming majority of Timorese vote for independence. — AP

15 AUG 2002

A new dawn for East Timor

MS By Kofi Annan 49-11

At the stroke of midnight — on May 19, 2002, the world will welcome East Timor into the family of nations. It will be a historic moment for East Timor, and for the United Nations. A proud and resilient people will realise a dream common to all peoples — to live as free men and women under a government of their own choosing. The pride of the East Timorese on that night will also be the pride of the international community and of the United Nations. Rarely has the world come together with such unity, resolve and speed to secure a people's self-determination. Credit for this achievement should go first and foremost to the East Timorese people, who have shown great courage and perseverance in rebuilding their country. They have risen to every challenge that has confronted them, and have unfailingly demonstrated their commitment to democracy. There are still daunting challenges ahead, but with a determined and dedicated leadership in place, and a strong Constitutional foundation, I believe they can face the future with confidence.

The international community can also take pride in the contribution we have made. After the swift restoration of order by the international force, authorised by the United Nations Council, the United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (UNTAET) was established in October 1999 with a mandate as unique as it was ambitious. The United Nations, in partnership with the people of East Timor, was tasked with rebuilding a devastated country and preparing it for independence.

Since then, peace has been secured, and

basic governmental structures and laws have been put in place. A sense of normality has returned. Children are attending schools, roads are being built, buildings reconstructed, health systems established — and new businesses are opening up every day. The citizens of East Timor have turned out in overwhelming numbers to vote in the Constituent Assembly and Presidential elections. Most encouragingly, in the last few months increasing numbers of refugees have returned.

United Nations peacekeepers and international police have brought about a return of law and order. The embryonic national military and police forces are creating the foundation for a secure future under the rule of law. True security also requires that East Timor balance effectively the twin de-

OPINION

mands of justice and reconciliation. This is an area where the international community must continue to support East Timorese efforts, particularly by helping the Commission for Reception, Truth and Reconciliation, which is about to start its vitally important work. Perhaps most importantly, the United Nations has helped put in place the foundations for effective, representative, and legitimate government.

The people of East Timor are rightly proud of the peaceful and legitimate character of their elections — just as they are of the high proportion of women in their institutions of state. For many months now, authority in virtually every sphere of public life has been vested in the East Timorese rather than in United Nations officials. On

20 May, when East Timor becomes an independent nation, an experienced and responsible executive and legislature will already be firmly in place.

But all this is only a beginning. The Government of East Timor faces enormous tasks, in the months and years ahead. The world must not abandon East Timor at this critical juncture. It must do everything it can to help ensure that the first years of independence are years of stability and progress.

The people of East Timor surely deserve that. A follow-on U.N. peacekeeping presence will provide support in three areas that are critical for the stability and viability of the new State: public administration, law and order, and external security.

That support will be reduced gradually over two years, as the role of the United Nations becomes one of providing traditional development assistance.

Good relations with its nearest neighbours will be essential to East Timor's future stability.

This will include close cooperation with Indonesia, in order to ensure timely agreement on the delimitation of the border, on the situation of the remaining refugees in West Timor, and on cooperation in prosecuting those accused of the serious crimes committed in 1999.

As Secretary-General, I am proud of the part the United Nations has played in that struggle, and especially in its last phase. I pledge that this will mark not an end, but a new beginning. The United Nations stands ready to play its full part alongside the independent nation of East Timor.

(The writer is Secretary-General, United Nations)

THE HINDU

3 May 2002

East Timor in 1975. — AFP.

Jakarta pats Gusmao

20-4-1999

JAKARTA: Indonesia gave its congratulations on Thursday to Xanana Gusmao, rebel leader who spearheaded East Timor's bloody struggle against Indonesian occupation and was overwhelmingly elected this weekend as the nascent nation's new President. The Foreign Minister, Hassan Wirayuda, spoke with Mr. Gusmao — who spent seven years in jail in Jakarta after being captured in 1992 — by telephone soon after election results were announced on Wednesday, a Ministry spokesman Marti Natalegawa said. He said Indonesia welcomed the peaceful, free and democratic manner in which the elections were held. "Indonesia looks forward to building a close and warm relation with East Timor." Ties between the two nations have improved significantly since 1999, when elements of the Indonesian military mounted a revenge campaign of killing, looting and burning in East Timor after voters chose independence in a U.N. sponsored independence ballot. Indonesia occupied East Timor in 1975. Hundreds died and 250,000 people fled their homes in the 1999 violence that ended in September of that year with the arrival of international peacekeepers. East Timor has been under U.N. rule ever since. — AP

19 APR 2002

THE HINDU

Gusmao sweeps East Timor polls

Associated Press 1974

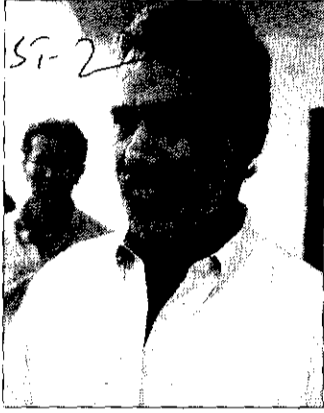
DILI (East Timor), April 16. — Mr Xanana Gusmao has won East Timor's first presidential elections, completing his transformation from poet to a gun-toting guerrilla commander to a respected statesman.

The wildly popular 55-year-old Mr Gusmao has been the symbol of East Timor's struggle for independence since it was invaded by Indonesia in 1975.

With 89 per cent of the 378,538 votes counted today, Mr Gusmao had 79.4 per cent, according to calculations based on data released by the electoral commission. His sole challenger, Mr Francisco Xavier do Amaral, had 17 per cent. Remaining ballots from Sunday's election were ruled invalid.

"We won," said Ms Milena Pires, Mr Gusmao's campaign manager. "We have around 80 per cent already, which is an excellent achievement."

Mr Do Amaral, who said he was only running to provide the electorate a choice, has no immediate plans to concede defeat, his supporters said. The UN electoral authorities said they would announce the official results tomorrow.



Mr Xanana Gusmao

The elections are the final step in East Timor's long and bloody struggle to break free of foreign rule. On 20 May, East Timor will become the world's newest independent country when its transitional UN administration formally hands over the running of the country.

Mr Jose Alexandre Gusmao joined East Timor's independence movement in 1974, following a coup in Lisbon that spelled the end of the Portuguese colonial empire. Before that time, he was a fun-loving young man in the colony's capital, Dili. His nickname, Xanana, he says, is derived from the American rock 'n' roll group *Sha Na Na*.

17 APR 2019

THE STATESMAN

East Timorese flock to polls

DILI, APRIL 14. East Timorese flocked to the polls today to pick the man who next month will represent their tiny country as President when it becomes the first new nation of the new millennium.

Even before the sun rose above the mountains that ring Dili, East Timor's waterfront capital, crowds were milling around polling booths. There was keen competition to be first in line when the voting slips were handed out for a lopsided contest in which the independence hero, Xanana Gusmao, takes on a relative unknown, Francisco Xavier do Amaral. The men are running independently of political parties.

Today's vote marks another way station for this once-troubled region on its way to statehood. Voters already elected a Parliament last August, for a provisional Government led by Chief Minister, Mari Alkatiri, who will become Prime Minister on independence day, May 20.

That's the day the powder-blue flag of the United Nations will be taken down and the banner of "Timor Lorosae" run up to take its place. The Presi-



The East Timorese presidential candidate, Alexander 'Xanana' Gusmao (right), casts his vote as the sole opposition candidate, Francisco Xavier do Amaral, looks on at a polling station in Dili, East Timor, on Sunday. — AP

dent — most likely the warrior-poet Gusmao, who was once jailed by the Indonesian Government for his political activism — will have limited powers in this semi-presidential system: he will be able to dismiss Parliament and declare war, but he does not appoint the Government.

But a big mandate for Mr. Gusmao, who led East Timor

out of colonial status in 1999, will give him a lot of clout over the Fretilin party, which holds 55 of the 88 seats in Parliament. Mr. Gusmao intends to show that there is popular support for a powerful President who can check the might of a Government run by Fretilin — the former warriors group he used to lead. — DPA



Historic E. Timor polls today

DILI (EAST TIMOR): Thousands of supporters of the two candidates competing in East Timor's first presidential elections rallied



in the capital to mark the end of the three-week campaign ahead of Sunday's historic election. Dancing to the beat of gongs, drums and cymbals, over 1,000 people gathered outside the seafront offices of Francisco Xavier do Amaral.

They were confident their candidate would win the election, despite predictions that he will lose by a landslide. Across town, people gathered on a soccer pitch to hear Xanana Gusmao, the former guerilla leader who is heavily favoured to win (the picture shows Mr. Gusmao speaking to

mediapersons in Dili on Saturday). "Xanana has proved himself," said Flavius Dos Santos, a schoolteacher. "If it weren't for him, we would not be here waiting to elect our own President." The vote will pave the way for East Timor to become the world's newest country on May 20, when the U.N. administration hands over to an East Timorese Government. The world body has been overseeing East Timor since it voted for independence from 24-years of Indonesian occupation in August 1999. Organisers predict a high turnout. More than 2,000 international and local monitors will observe the vote. — AP

AP

Skip E. Timor fete, Megawati told

By Amit Baruah. ^{FD-15} ^{WJ} ^{S. S. Anis B. Giron}

SINGAPORE, APRIL 19. A month from today, the new nation of East Timor will take birth. With a newly-elected President, Xanana Gusmao, East Timorese will take over their nation from the U.N.'s transitional administration. As the nation of 800,000 prepares to receive dignitaries from across the world, discordant notes are being sounded in Indonesia.

The Indonesian President, Megawati Sukrnoputri, has already been asked by leading politicians in the country not to attend the East Timor independence day celebrations on May 20 in the capital, Dili. East Timor residents voted overwhelmingly in a 1999 referendum to be free of Indonesian rule, a process that was marred by violence. The "loss" of Indonesia's "27th province", clearly, weighs heavily on some top leaders in Indonesia. Already, the Golkar party leader, Akbar Tandjung, facing trial in a corruption case, has asked Ms.



Members of East Timor's legislature listen to the President-elect, Xanana Gusmao (not seen), in Dili on Friday. Mr. Gusmao outlined his economic programme for East Timor which would become the world's newest nation on May 20. — AP

Megawati not to travel to East Timor for the independence celebrations. "The President should listen to suggestions by the (lower) House (of Parliament). It's better for the President not to attend," Mr. Akbar said in Jakarta. Dozens of Heads of State are expected to be in Dili when the U.N. hands over the reins of Government to East

Timor leaders. The Indonesian President has been invited by the U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, as well as East Timor leadership to attend the celebrations.

According to the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Hasan Wiradarma, the President had not yet decided whether or not she would accept the invitation.

THE HINDU

Gusmao invites Megawati to Dili

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, MAY 2. The East Timor leader and President-designate, Xanana Gusmao, called on the Indonesian President, Megawati Sukarnoputri, in Jakarta today and extended an invitation to attend the independence celebrations later this month.

Mr. Gusmao, a charismatic guerilla leader turned politician, said after his meeting that he expected Ms. Megawati to attend the celebrations sched-

uled for May 20 in Dili. "I came here to invite (Ms. Megawati) personally on behalf of East Timor. We believe Mrs. President will go in May," he said.

Several top Indonesian leaders have opposed the President's visit to East Timor — more a political point-scoring exercise than an effort at lending an element of seriousness to diplomacy.

In his comments on today's meeting, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, Hasan Wirajuda,

said: "(The) President said she would officially state, at the right time, her decision."

"(The Indonesian President), in the meeting, stated that there was a mutual interest of both countries to solve all problems between us so there would be no obstacles in establishing a bilateral relationship between Indonesia and Timor Lorosae (East Timor)."

Maintaining that the President wanted good relations with East Timor, Mr. Hasan

said: "He (Mr. Gusmao) is also coming as Indonesia's closest friend and sincerely wants to show to the people of Indonesia that for the people of Timor Lorosae, Indonesia is not only geographically close but that they also want to offer their kind hands for friendship."

Among the Indonesian leaders who has opposed Ms. Megawati's visit to East Timor is the Lower House Speaker and Golkar party leader, Akbar Tandjung.

National Questions

Just as India and Pakistan, driven by their mutually antagonistic ideas about nationhood, square off for yet another potential conflict across the Line of Control, in far away South East Asia a new nation has been born. At the stroke of midnight hour on Saturday, East Timor was inducted as the 190th member of the UN. A Portuguese colony for over 300 years, East Timor was militarily annexed by Indonesia in 1975 soon after the withdrawal of the colonial power. The illegal occupation was inaugurated by a massacre of Timorese people which has few historical parallels in an island-nation of that size. By the time the UN-sponsored referendum came along in 1999, an estimated 200,000 Timorese people had lost their lives in a quarter of a century of repression by Jakarta. Put that number alongside the population of the newly independent nation - - 8,00,000 according to latest figures - - and one begins to get some idea of what was at stake in the long Timorese march to freedom. Yet, for a long time, the logic of the cold war dictated that there would be little international support for the Timorese struggle. The US in particular was only too willing to look the other way because the crimes in East Timor were being conducted by a client regime, led by military dictator Suharto.

Contrarians might argue that the Timorese insurgency was not so much an expression of legitimate indigenous aspirations as a cynical exercise in power grab by a local elite aided and abetted by regional powers, such as Australia, with the aim of weakening a rival strategic player. While there might be a grain of truth in this, the insinuation that the Timorese disaffection was no more than a product of a foreign hand can hardly - as we know only too well - be taken seriously. The same can be said for the argument that opposes the new Timorese state on the grounds that a proliferation of such tiny, impoverished nations does no good either for the local population or the global order. Economically unviable, they are hugely vulnerable in the face of pressures by the global big boys, principally the US. While that might be so, the simple fact is that the pervasive American influence on the global scene is a function of reasons other than the creation or otherwise of a tiny new state. Warm welcome then to the newest member of the community of nations.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

21 MAY 2002

A NATION IS BORN

XTC-11 20/5

S B Ann
E Timor

E Timor celebrates freedom after 450 yrs

Dili, May 19

EAST TIMOR declared its hard-fought independence shortly after midnight in front of tens of thousands of revelers, taking its place as the first new nation of the millennium.

On a makeshift stage in a field on the outskirts of the capital Dili, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan handed over the reins of power to East Timor's Parliament chief, triggering a thunderous roar from the crowd.

Former guerrilla leader Xanana Gusmao was declared President. He stood by Annan's side as the blue UN flag was lowered by a UN soldier clad in camouflage to the strains of *We Shall Overcome*.

The black, red and white East Timor flag was carried to the stage by a Timorese soldier flanked by six colleagues carrying rifles with fixed bayonets.

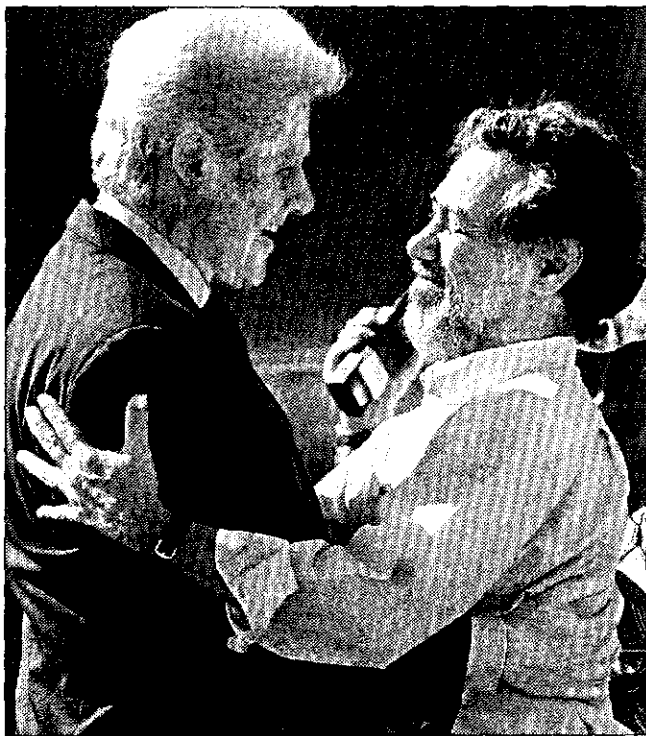
The new national anthem rang out as the flag was slowly raised, marking the birth of a staunchly Roman Catholic territory surrounded by the world's most populous Muslim country, Indonesia.

Later, fireworks lit up the night skies.

"I salute you, people of East Timor, for the courage and perseverance you have shown," a smiling Annan told the crowds in a dusty field on the outskirts of Dili.

"You should be very proud. That a small nation is able to inspire the world and be the focus of our attention is the highest tribute that I can pay," Annan said.

"At this moment, we honour every citizen of East Timor who persisted in the struggle for independence. We also remember the many who are no longer with us but who dreamed of this moment. It is their day too," Annan said.



AP PHOTO
Former US President Bill Clinton hugs East Timor President-elect Xanana Gusmao at Dili airport on Sunday.

Run-up to independence

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●1515: First Portuguese traders arrive ●1859: Timor divided into Portuguese East, Dutch West ●1942: Thousands die in fighting between Japan & Australia ●1975: Portugal withdraws: Indonesia invades ●1976: Indonesia annexes East Timor | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●1991: Indonesia troops massacre protesters in Dili ●1992: Rebel leader Xanana Gusmao is captured ●1998: End of President Suharto's 32-year rule ●1999: Vote for freedom ●2002: E Timor become independent |
|--|--|

Annan told Timorese independence was just the start of a long journey. "Independence is not an end. It is the beginning of self-rule, which requires compromise, discipline, unity and resolve. While you have succeeded in one challenge, winning your independence, this only paves the way for many more."

Reuters

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

20 MAY 2002

2015
HD-14

EAST TIMOR / FORMIDABLE CHALLENGES AHEAD

New nation takes birth

By Amit Baruah

SINGAPORE, MAY 19. At the stroke of the midnight hour, East Timor, long under the Indonesian heel, was born a free nation. With a population of 800,000 (similar to that of Fiji), East Timor will be the 190th member of the United Nations.

As celebrations continued in the capital Dili, graced by a satisfied U.N. Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, the long march to freedom for this poor South-East Asian nation has just begun. There is little doubt that the people of East Timor, once a Portuguese colony, deserve their freedom just as much as citizens of other free nations – perhaps more – given their sustained campaign for freedom from Indonesian occupation.

With an estimated 200,000 deaths under Indonesian occupation since 1975, the East Timorese fought long and hard till they managed to win their freedom in a U.N.-supervised referendum on August 30, 1999. During the referendum, there was unprecedented violence unleashed by militias backed by the Indonesian armed forces before international intervention effectively ended the carnage.

On April 14 this year, the veteran guerilla leader, Xanana Gusmao, was elected President of East Timor by a whopping margin. Out of a total electorate of 439,000, Mr. Gusmao received 86.2 per cent of the vote. In Dili, apart from the formal passing of the baton to the East Timor President, the first Government of the Democratic Republic of East Timor will take shape. The word "transitional" disappears from its nomenclature forever.

There will be enormous pressure on the new East Timor leadership to deliver – the country is one of the poorest in South-East Asia with a per capita income of \$500. Various political strands in East Timor will also be under test to work together as a team and actualise what has been promised to the people. Whatever be the challenges, one thing is clear – that the people have got their "own" Government and, henceforth, will have the power and the authority to



USHERING IN A NEW DAWN: East Timorese girls hold candle lights during the independence celebrations in Dili on Sunday. — AFP

install and remove home-grown political leaderships and groups.

The country, which has a single important export (coffee) and has some 85 per cent of its people living in rural areas, faced a total collapse of its economy in the wake of the 1999 referendum. Considerable reconstruction work has been taken up by the United Nations with the help of the donor community. "The Timor Sea Arrangement reached on July 5, 2001, with the Government of Australia is an extremely important agreement for East Timor. Revenues from the Timor Sea will help ensure that the gains made in social and economic recovery since the violence of 1999 are maintained and increased, and will allow East Timor to escape dependence on external aid to finance its budget after mid-decade (2005). The important issue which will face the new Government... is how to make the best use of these revenues for sustained economic development and poverty reduction," a World Bank document said.

On the streets of Dili, there were demonstrators demanding that the oil from the Timor Sea be used for East Timor alone.

Many in East Timor believe that with the sharing of revenues with Australia, their country has got a raw deal out of the arrangement. "East Timor faces an enormous challenge in simultaneously undertaking a fundamental political transformation and building of State institutions.... the declaration of political independence will not in itself signal the emergence of a fully functional civil administration or the achievement of reconstruction and development goals.

"Indeed, at the time of independence, most civil servants will have been in place for less than 12 months, with financial and administrative systems still new and fragile. While major advances have been made, the East Timorese administration will require continued assistance for a sustained period after independence," the World Bank paper added.

While one cannot forget the ground realities of poverty and under-development, the fact remains that May 20, first and foremost, is a day of celebration for the people of East Timor.

THE HINDU

20 MAY 2002

East Timor Favours parliamentary democracy

5/12 REUTERS 10/2

DILI (East Timor), Feb. 9.
— East Timor's constituent assembly approved a draft constitution today in the tiny territory's latest move toward statehood.

Officials said the draft envisaged a government run along parliamentary lines rather than presidential, unlike an earlier version that called for the president to have extensive powers.

East Timor's independence hero Mr Xanana Gusmao is widely expected to win the presidential election after it becomes formally independent on 20 May.

Officials will distribute copies of the draft constitution to get feedback from ordinary citizens before the assembly formally approves the document, expected early next month.

The United Nations has administered East Timor since late 1999, when foreign peacekeepers stepped in after pro-Jakarta militias destroyed much of the country following a referendum that saw an overwhelming vote for independence from Indonesia. During today's vote on the draft constitution, a few members of the 88-seat assembly abstained and questioned whether the East Timorese would accept the new document as it curtailed presidential power. But the assembly is under no legal obligation to accept changes suggested by citizens to the draft constitution.

Indonesia invaded the former Portuguese colony in 1975 and annexed it the following year in a move never recognised by the UN.

THE STATESMAN