



Israel-Lebanon: Maritime Border Deal

Why in News?

Recently, Israel and Lebanon signed a U.S.-brokered Maritime Border Deal which paves the way for lucrative **offshore gas extraction** by the neighbors that remain technically at war.

What is the Deal?

▪ Background:

- Lebanon and Israel have been **officially at war since Israel's creation in 1948** and both countries **claim some 860 square kilometers (330 square miles) of the [Mediterranean Sea](#)**.
- There have been decade old tensions between Israel and Lebanon's competing claims over offshore gas fields in the region, which contains part of the Karish gas field and Qana, a prospective gas field.
 - The Karish gas field, being developed by Israel, came under threat from **Hezbollah, Lebanon's powerful political and militant group backed by Iran**.
- The two countries **declared overlapping boundaries in 2011 in the Mediterranean**

Sea.

- Since both countries have been technically at war, the **United Nations was asked to mediate.**
 - The issue gained significance after **Israel discovered two gas fields off its coast a decade ago**, which can help turn it into an energy exporter.

▪ About:

- It resolves a territorial dispute in the eastern Mediterranean Sea, in an area that **Lebanon wants to explore for natural gas.**
- The gas field is located on the **maritime boundary between the two countries** and this agreement would allow **both countries to get royalties from the gas.**
- Under the deal, Israel receives **full rights to explore the Karish field.**
- Lebanon receives full rights in the **nearby Qana field, but it agreed to allow Israel a share of the royalties.**
- It sets a border between Lebanese and Israeli waters for the first time, largely along a **demarcation referred to as Line 23.**
- The agreement does not **touch on the shared land border between Israel and Lebanon**, which is still disputed.
 - This border is also called the **Blue Line, a boundary that was drawn up by the UN after Israel withdrew** from southern Lebanon in 2000.

▪ Significance:

- The agreement is also expected to avert the immediate threat of conflict **between Israel and Hezbollah militants in Lebanon.**
- The agreement will create **new sources of energy and income for both countries**, particularly important for Lebanon, which is facing a **crippling energy and financial crises.**
- It can provide Europe **with a potential new source of gas amid energy shortages** caused by the [Russian invasion of Ukraine.](#)

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions

Q. Consider the following pairs: (2019)

Sea Bordering Country

1. Adriatic Sea : Albania
2. Black Sea : Croatia
3. Caspian Sea : Kazakhstan
4. Mediterranean Sea : Morocco
5. Red Sea : Syria

Which of the pairs given above are correctly matched?

- (a) 1, 2 and 4 only
- (b) 1, 3 and 4 only
- (c) 2 and 5 only
- (d) 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5

Ans: (b)

Exp:

- The **Adriatic Sea** is a part of the Mediterranean Sea positioned between the eastern coastline of Italy, and countries of the Balkan Peninsula, from Slovenia, through Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and to Albania. **Hence, pair 1 is correctly matched.**
- The Black Sea is an inland sea located between far southeastern Europe and the far western edges

of the continent of Asia and the country of Turkey. It is bordered by Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia and Georgia. **Hence, pair 2 is not correctly matched.**

- The Caspian Sea is an enclosed body of water between Asia and Europe. It is bordered by Iran, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan and Russia. **Hence, pair 3 is correctly matched.**
- There are **21 countries which border the Mediterranean Sea**. These are Spain, France, Monaco, Italy, Malta, Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, Greece, Turkey, Cyprus, Syria, Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, Libya, Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco.
 - Morocco's Mediterranean coast represents the westernmost edge of the Northern African coast. The coastline features the Strait of Gibraltar that marks the link between the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. **Hence, pair 4 is correctly matched.**
- There are six countries (Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Egypt, Sudan, Eritrea, and Djibouti) bordering the Red Sea. **Hence, pair 5 is not correctly matched.**
- **Therefore, option (b) is the correct answer.**

Q. Mediterranean Sea is a border of which of the following countries? (2017)

1. Jordan
2. Iraq
3. Lebanon
4. Syria

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

- (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
- (b) 2 and 3 only
- (c) 3 and 4 only
- (d) 1, 3 and 4 only

Ans: (c)

Source: TH

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