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Article For Reading:

Pyrrhic peace: On the Hamas-Israel ceasefire

After 15 months of war, which saw the deaths of tens of thousands of people, the destruction of much of Gaza and multiple rounds of painstaking negotiations, Hamas and Israel have agreed to a ceasefire. As soon as the news was out, thousands ventured out on the streets in Gaza, hoping that the daily bombardment and shelling would come to an end. Uncertainty still lingered, but both sides resolved their last-minute differences over details about Israel's partial withdrawal from Gaza and the names of the hostages to be released on day one and the ceasefire came into force on Sunday (January 19, 2025). This is not a permanent end to the war. But given the violence that Israel and Gaza have witnessed since October 7, 2023, even a pause in the war is a great relief, especially for Gaza's 2.3 million Palestinians. The agreement is expected to be implemented in three phases. In the first phase, Hamas will release 33 hostages, while Israel will release about 1,000 Palestinian security prisoners. The second phase would see more exchanges of hostages and prisoners and both sides are required to announce a permanent end to the hostilities. The third phase will involve discussions on the 'day after', including who should be in charge of Gaza.

As of now, both sides stay focused on phase one. Trouble could arise when negotiations for the next phases begin. When Israel launched the war, it set two objectives for itself — the destruction of Hamas and the release of hostages. In 15 months of war, Israel has **degraded** Hamas's militant infrastructure, but the group has survived and **reinvented** itself as an **insurgency**. According to Antony Blinken, the outgoing U.S. Secretary of State, Hamas recruited as many fighters as it had lost during the war. Israel's inability to destroy Hamas or secure the release of the hostages through the offensive raises serious questions about the IDF's military **tactics** in Gaza. This could probably be one of the factors that **persuaded** Benjamin Netanyahu to accept the ceasefire. But he has not committed to bringing the war to an end. Hamas, on the other side, demands a complete withdrawal of Israel from Gaza. Despite the possible **roadblocks**, the fact that a ceasefire came into force is welcome news. It provides a desperately needed relief for Gaza and a platform to build further talks. Israel, Palestinians as well as the international mediators should now work towards bridging the gaps in the post-war scenario. Israel will not accept a situation that would leave Hamas as a ruling force in Gaza. A more pragmatic solution is to form a united administration of all Palestinian factions under the leadership of the internationally recognised Palestinian Authority, and then shift the focus towards the **reconstruction** of Gaza.

But for this plan to work and peace to prevail, Israel should be ready to withdraw all its troops from the Gaza Strip.

Summary:

After 15 months of war, Israel and Hamas agreed to a ceasefire with plans for three phases, including hostage and prisoner exchanges and future discussions on Gaza's governance. Israel aimed to destroy Hamas but only weakened its infrastructure, while Hamas demands Israel's complete withdrawal from Gaza. The ceasefire offers temporary relief to Gaza's 2.3 million people but faces challenges in achieving lasting peace. A united Palestinian administration under the Palestinian Authority is proposed for stability and Gaza's reconstruction.

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Vocabulary:

1. Pyrrhic (adjective) पायरिक

Meaning: Achieved at excessive cost, outweighing the benefits.

Synonym: Costly, Ruinous

Antonym: Beneficial, Advantageous

Example: The victory was a Pyrrhic one, leaving the team drained of resources.

2. Ceasefire (noun) संघर्षविराम

Meaning: A temporary suspension of fighting by mutual agreement.

Synonym: Truce, Armistice

Antonym: Hostility, Conflict

Example: The two nations agreed to a ceasefire to allow peace talks.

3. Insurgency (noun) विद्रोह

Meaning: A rebellion or uprising against authority.

Synonym: Rebellion, Revolt

Antonym: Peace, Obedience

Example: The government struggled to control the insurgency in the region.

4. Degrade (verb) घटाना

Meaning: To reduce in quality, value, or strength.

Synonym: Deteriorate, Weaken

Antonym: Enhance, Strengthen

Example: Constant misuse degraded the functionality of the machine.

5. Hostilities (noun) शत्रुता

Meaning: Acts of warfare or aggression.

Synonym: Conflict, Fighting

Antonym: Peace, Harmony

Example: Hostilities ended with the signing of a peace treaty.

6. Persuaded (verb) प्रेरित किया

Meaning: Convinced someone to do or believe something.

Synonym: Convinced, Influenced

Antonym: Dissuaded, Discouraged

Example: She persuaded her friend to join the community project.

7. Reinvention (noun) पुनर्नवाचार

Meaning: The process of changing something to improve it.

Synonym: Transformation, Innovation

Antonym: Stagnation, Preservation

Example: The company's reinvention saved it from bankruptcy.

8. Tactics (noun) रणनीति

Meaning: Specific strategies or actions to achieve a goal.

Synonym: Strategy, Maneuver

Antonym: Disorder, Improvisation

Example: The coach outlined new tactics to defeat the opposing team.

9. Roadblocks (noun) बाधाएँ

Meaning: Obstacles or challenges that hinder progress.

Synonym: Barriers, Hurdles

Antonym: Opportunities, Aids

Example: Financial constraints are major roadblocks to the project's success.

10. Reconstruction (noun) पुनर्निर्माण

Meaning: The process of rebuilding something that has been damaged.

Synonym: Rebuilding, Restoration

Antonym: Destruction, Demolition

Example: The reconstruction of the town after the earthquake took years.



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