# BrainBuzz Academy

## **UPSC Current Affairs - 20-Jan-25**

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#### **International Relations**

#### Pink fire retardant



As multiple wildfires continue to torch Southern California, authorities are using planes to drop a large amount of bright pink fire retardant to curb the blaze.

Fire retardant is a mix of chemicals used to extinguish or slow down the spread of fires. There are different types of fire retardant but to tackle wildfires in the US, authorities most commonly use Phos-Chek — a brand of fire retardant — which mostly contains an ammonium phosphate-based slurry.

Typically, it is made of salts such as ammonium polyphosphate, which does not evaporate easily like water and stays for longer. Colour is usually added to the fire retardant to ensure that firefighters can see it against the landscape.

Environmental experts have said that spraying fire retardants using planes is ineffective, expensive and a growing source of pollution for rivers and streams.

These toxic metals include chromium and cadmium which can cause cancer, and kidney and liver diseases in humans. However, their adverse impact on the environment is of more concern, especially when retardants enter waterways.

#### Israel-Hamas deal



Mediators in Doha, Qatar, have agreed on a phased ceasefire deal in Gaza on the following terms: During a 42-day first phase beginning Sunday, Hamas will release 33 hostages and Israel will release between 900 and 1,650 Palestinian detainees, including all of those detained since October 7, 2023. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) will withdraw from central Gaza and the Netzarim Corridor — a 2-4km-wide security clearing that it has created, cutting Gaza in half up to the Mediterranean — and eventually from the Philadelphi Corridor, the buffer zone along the Gaza-Egypt border.

Negotiations for a second phase will begin on the 16th day after the ceasefire comes into effect, and is expected to produce almost a full Israeli withdrawal from the Strip, and the release of all remaining hostages by Hamas in return for a yet-to-be-decided number of Palestinian detainees.

In the third phase, border crossings will be reopened fully, and reconstruction will begin in Gaza.

### Useful information for all competitive exams: Israel: Capital: Jerusalem President: Isaac Herzog Prime Minister: Benjamin Netanyahu Currency: New shekel (问) (ILS) Hamas: The Islamic Resistance Movement, abbreviated Hamas is a Palestinian nationalist Sunni Islamist political organisation with a military wing known as the Al-Qassam Brigades. It has governed the Israeli-occupied Gaza Strip since 2007. Headquarters: Gaza City, Gaza Strip

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