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Tele-Law Programme

- The Department of Justice commemorates the milestone of crossing nine lakh beneficiaries under its Tele-Law programme. It saw a surge of 369% growth in number of beneficiaries seeking legal advice during last year.
- [Tele-Law means the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for the delivery of legal information and advice.]
- The Tele-Law programme connects the disadvantaged and needy seeking legal advice from Panel Lawyers through e-interface platform available in Common Service Centres (CSCs).
- It was launched by the Ministry of Law and Justice in collaboration with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) in 2017 to address cases at the pre-litigation stage.
- For implementing the Tele-Law programme, the Department of Justice has partnered with National Legal Services Authorities (NALSA) and CSC e-Governance Service India Limited.
- The concept of Tele-Law is to facilitate delivery of legal advice through a panel of lawyers stationed at the state LSA (SALSA) and CSC.
- It connects citizens with lawyers through video conferencing facilities by the Para-Legal Volunteers stationed at identified 50,000 CSCs.
- The service is free for those who are eligible for free legal Aid as mentioned under Section 12 of the Legal Services Authority Act, 1987. For all others a nominal fee is charged.
- Tele-Law programme is presently operational in 633 districts, including 115 Aspirational Districts across 28 States and 6 Union Territories.

White Flag Campaign

- In Malaysia, some residents of low-income families have started waving white flags as part of the “White Flag (benderaputi) Campaign”.
- They are doing this to convey distress about the financial crunch they have had to deal with amid the lockdowns due to Covid-19.
- As part of the movement, families that are facing hunger or need any other kind of assistance are encouraged to wave a white flag or put a piece of white cloth outside their homes to signal that they need help.
- The idea is that by spotting the white flag, neighbours and good samaritans

can reach them.
- On the Sambal SOS app, which was initially called the Bendera Putih app, people can see the map of Malaysia where active food banks are marked. This is to help people easily track down food banks.

Red Flag Campaign

- There is yet another movement called the red flag campaign or #benderamerah that works in the same way as the white flag movement.
- It was started by the Malaysian Animal Association as many families were abandoning pets they couldn't afford to feed.

Black Flag Movement

- Alongside the white flag movement, there is the black flag movement in order to express dissatisfaction of the public with the Malaysian government against the government's management of the pandemic.
- Specifically, this movement is demanding that Prime Minister resign.

Cooperation Movement

- The government announced the formation of a separate Cooperation Ministry, a subject that till date was looked after by the Ministry of Agriculture.
- **Cooperatives,** by definition, are organisations formed at the grassroots level by people to harness the power of collective bargaining towards a common goal.
- According to the ILO, a cooperative is an autonomous association of persons united voluntarily to meet their common economic, social and cultural needs and aspirations.
- These needs and aspirations are met through a jointly owned and democratically controlled enterprise.

History of the Cooperative Movement in India

- **Before independence** - The cooperative movement has its roots in 19th century Europe. It wad developed in pre-Independence India in response to agricultural distress and indebtedness.
- The first credit cooperative society was formed in Banking in 1903 with the support of the Government of Bengal. It was registered under the Friendly Societies Act of the British Government.
- But, the formal launch of the cooperative movement in India occurred with the introduction of the Cooperative Societies Act in 1904. Another Cooperative Societies Act was passed in 1912.

- In 1919, cooperation was made a provincial (state) subject. This allowed the various provinces to come up with their own legislation governing cooperatives under the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms.
- The categorization carried on to the Government of India Act, 1935.
- In 1942, the Multi-Unit Cooperative Societies Act was enacted to cover Cooperative Societies with membership from more than one province.
- **After independence** - The cooperatives became an integral part of Five-Year Plans.
- National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC) was set up under National Cooperative Development Corporation Act, 1962.
- In 1984, the Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act was enacted to remove the plethora of different laws governing the same types of societies.
- The Government of India announced a National Policy on Co-operatives in 2002.

Laws governing Cooperative Societies

- Cooperation is in the **concurrent list**, which means both the central and state governments can govern them.
- A majority of the cooperative societies are governed by laws in their respective states, with a Cooperation Commissioner and the Registrar of Societies as their governing office.
- In 2002, the Centre passed a Multi-State Cooperative Societies Act that allowed for registration of societies with operations in more than one state.
- These are mostly banks, dairies and sugar mills whose area of operation spreads across states.
- The Central Registrar of Societies is their controlling authority, but on the ground the State Registrar takes actions on his behalf.

Constitutional Provisions Related to Cooperatives

- The 97th Amendment Constitutional Act, 2011 added a new Part IXB regarding the cooperatives working in India.
- This Act amended the Article 19(1)(c) of the Constitution by adding a word “cooperatives” after “unions and associations”. This enables all the citizens the fundamental right to form cooperatives.
- A new Article 43B was added in the Directive Principles of State Policy regarding the “promotion of cooperative societies”.

Bonalu Festival

- Bonalu is a popular religious festival of the Jagadambika Temple on Golconda Fort, Telangana.

- It is the state festival of Telangana. It is celebrated in parts of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.
- The Word Bonalu came from “Bhojanalu” meaning food, which is offered to the goddess during festival time.
- According to the Hindu calendar month of Aashadam, Bonalu festival starts with the religious procession starting from Langar Houz to the temple near Bala Hissar on top of the Golconda Fort.
- It is believed that during Ashada Maasam, the Goddess comes back to her maternal home.
- So people come to see her and bring offerings of food (Bonalu) to show their love and affection, just as they would prepare a special meal when their own daughters visit them.

Modifications to Agriculture Infrastructure Fund

- The Union Cabinet gave its approval to the following modifications in Central Sector Scheme of Financing Facility under ‘Agriculture Infrastructure Fund (AIF)’.
- **Eligibility** has now been extended to State Agencies/APMCs, National & State Federations of Cooperatives, Federations of Farmers Producers Organizations (FPOs) and Federations of Self Help Groups (SHGs).
- **Interest subvention** - At present Interest subvention for a loan upto Rs. 2 crore in one location is eligible under the scheme.
- In case, one eligible entity puts up projects in different locations then all such projects will be now be eligible for interest subvention for loan upto Rs. 2 crore.
- **Limitation** - However, for a private sector entity there will be a limit of a maximum of 25 such projects.
- This limitation will not be applicable to state agencies, national and state federations of cooperatives, federations of FPOs and federation of SHGs.
- Location will mean physical boundary of a village or town having a distinct LGD (Local Government Directory) code. Each of such projects should be in a location having a separate LGD code.
- For APMCs, interest subvention for a loan upto Rs. 2 crore will be provided for each project of different infrastructure types.
- **Power** has been delegated to Union Agriculture Minister to make necessary changes with regard to addition or deletion of beneficiary.
- **Period** of financial facility has been extended from 4 to 6 years upto 2025-26 and overall period of the scheme has been extended from 10 to 13 upto 2032-33.

Bhalia Wheat

- In a major boost to wheat exports, the first shipment of Geographical Indication (GI) certified Bhalia variety of wheat was exported today to Kenya and Sri Lanka from Gujarat.
- This GI certified wheat has high protein content and is sweet in taste.
- The unique characteristic of the wheat variety is that grown in the **rain-fed condition without irrigation**.
- The crop is grown mostly across Bhal region of Gujarat - Ahmadabad, Anand, Kheda, Bhavanagar, Surendranagar, Bharuch districts.
- To know more about of Geographical Indication, click here.

Source: PIB, The Hindu, The Indian Express, First Post

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