

White flag campaign' in Malaysia

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In news

Recently, Malaysians in the Covid lockdown waved white flags to ask for help.

About white flag campaign

- Residents of low-income families of Malaysia have started waving white flags as part of the so-called "White Flag Campaign", or the #benderaputi (white flag) movement.
- The residents 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.
- The world over, white flags are used as a symbol of surrender or truce.
- The phrase 'white flag' has also found its way into the Cambridge dictionary, which defines it as "a flag that is waved to show that you accept defeat or do not intend to attack".

Similar white flag campaigns

Malaysians are not alone in signalling their distress and food insecurity amid the pandemic through this symbol. Something similar happened at the other end of the world in 2020.

Some Central American countries such as El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras “white flags have appeared all over the social terrain as indictments of a failed political and economic system whose primary effect for common people has been enduring a life of dehumanization, precarity, and marginalization.”

Sambal app

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

Black flag movement

- In order to express dissatisfaction with the Malaysian government, Black flag movement has been launched.
- Specifically, this movement is demanding that Prime Minister Muhyiddin Yassin resign
- A group called Sekretariat Solidariti Rakyat (SSR) urged the public to raise black flags as a sign of protest against the government’s management of the pandemic.

Red flag movement

As per the news reports, the red flag campaign or #benderamerah, that works in the same way as the white flag movement, but the difference is that the former is targeted at Malaysian citizens only and was started by the Malaysian Animal Association as many families were abandoning pets they couldn’t afford to feed.