

# THE BEACON

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## Heavy rain alert in Kerala, says IMD

Anjali Ram

**KERALA:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) alerted on Thursday, May 13 that Kerala and Lakshadweep Islands will receive heavy to very heavy rainfall from May 14 onwards as a low pressure area, likely to form in the Arabian Sea, is expected to intensify into a cyclonic storm. "A Low Pressure Area is predicted by India Meteorological Department in the SE Arabian Sea by 14 May, could intensify into a Cyclonic Storm. Very heavy rains, winds in Kerala on 14, 15 May." Kerala Chief Minister tweeted on Wednesday. The issued warning from IMD directs the government to alert various districts in Kerala like Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Ernakulam and Idukki to stay alert on the changing weather conditions for Thursday. Even the southern states like Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, coastal areas, and Mahe are predicted to receive heavy rainfall and thunderstorms. As the sea will be rough, the Kerala government has advised the fishermen not to venture into the sea and to follow the safety guidelines put forward by the Kerala State Disaster Management Authority.

## Clinical trial announced for 02-18 years

Ahana Bagchi

The Union Ministry of Health on Thursday, May 13 announced that the National Regulator of the country, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI), after careful examination, has accepted the recommendation of Subject Expert Committee (SEC) and accorded permission to conduct the Phase II/III clinical trial of Covaxin (COVID vaccine) in the age group 2 to 18 years, to its manufacturer Bharat Biotech Ltd.

The trial will be conducted in 525 healthy volunteers. In the trial, the vaccine will be given by intramuscular route in two doses at day 0 and day 28. As a rapid regulatory response, the proposal was



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deliberated in the Subject Expert Committee (SEC) on Tuesday, May 11, 2021. The Committee after detailed deliberation recommended

for grant of permission to conduct proposed Phase II clinical trial to certain conditions. The approval comes after USFDA's nod for use of vaccine on children. **Creative Commons**

## UPSC prelims postponed from 2 - 18

Niranjan Damodaran

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) has decided to defer the Civil Services preliminary examination, amid an unprecedented surge in the number of Covid-19 cases in the country. The exam which was scheduled to be conducted on June 27, has now been postponed to October 10.

"Due to the prevailing conditions caused by the Novel Corona Virus (COVID-19), the Union Public Service Commission



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has deferred the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2021, which was scheduled to be held on 27th June, 2021. Now, this Examination will be held on

10th October, 2021," read the UPSC notification. Three main stages are conducted annually for Civil Service examinations: preliminary, main and interview. **Creative Commons**

## Sterlite releases 1st batch of oxygen post SC order

Pranav Shriram

Vedanta Ltd's Sterlite Copper Plant in Thoothukudi, that shut down in May 2018 over issues of environment pollution and a protest against its expansion earlier in March that year, has dispatched its first batch of medical-grade oxygen, the company said in a statement on Thursday May 13.

This comes after the Supreme Court issued an order on April 27 permitting the operation of the oxygen plant after the Tamil Nadu government proposed a course of action. "The present order for permitting the operation of the oxygen plant on a stand-alone basis

shall remain in force until 31 July 2021, at which point of time, a decision will be taken based on the current state of the pandemic at that time," read the record of proceedings.

The statement further mentioned that the initial daily distribution would be undertaken by 2 tankers, with the first already having left the plant carrying 4.7 tonnes of the product to Tirunelveli and Thoothukudi on Thursday. The same would later be scaled up with increase in production. Additionally, Sterlite Copper CEO Pankaj Kumar said that the unit was directly contributing towards saving lives. **Creative Commons**

## India keeps top spot in ICC test rankings

Aamir Sohail

India have remained the top ranked men's test cricket team, according to an annual update on Thursday, May 13 of the ICC Men's Test Team Rankings. They remain just above fellow World Test Championship finalists New Zealand with a one point lead with India on 121 and New Zealand on 120 rating points.

India lead due to 2-1 and 3-1 wins over Australia and New Zealand, respectively. The Kiwi's 2-0 series wins over West Indies and Pakistan has helped them to



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keep ahead of England and Australia in places 3 and 4 respectively. The update

takes into account matches played since May 2020 at 100 per cent and the

previous two years at 50 per cent which means England have moved above Australia to third position as their 4-0 defeat to Australia in 2017-18 has now dropped from the rankings.

West Indies moved from eighth to sixth, their best position since 2013 owing to their 2-0 series win over Bangladesh and the drawn series with Sri Lanka. Pakistan remained in fifth position with 94 points, a gain of three points. Although Afghanistan and Ireland have test status they did not figure into the list as they did not play enough matches. **Creative Commons**



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