

Science Express - Biodiversity Special

Brief Note

Science Express is an innovative mobile exhibition mounted on a specially designed 16 coach AC train, traveling across India since October 2007. After the successful tour across India in four phases, this iconic train is running since 2012 as 'Science Express - Biodiversity-Special (SEBS)' - a unique collaborative initiative of Department of Science & Technology and Ministry of Environment & Forests, Govt. of India.

The SEBS 2013 edition was inaugurated and flagged-off from Delhi Safdarjung station on 9 April 2013 by Smt. Sheila Dikshit, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Delhi, Smt. Jayanthi Natarajan, Hon'ble Minister for Environment & Forests, and Shri Pawan Kumar the then Minister of Railways, Govt. of India. In the current phase from 9 April to 28 October 2013, SEBS is scheduled to travel to 62 locations across India. At each location, it usually halts for 3-4 days during which the exhibition remains open for visitors.

Since its launch in October 2007, the Science Express exhibition train has traveled over 90,000 km across the country. With over 90 lakh visitors at its 290 halts and 1050 exhibition days till date, *Science Express* is the largest, longest and most visited mobile science exhibition in India and has created several records.

The current decade (2011-2020) has been declared as the United Nations Decade on Biodiversity and United Nations Decade for Deserts and Fight against Desertification. The 'Science Express - Biodiversity Special', therefore, primarily addresses the theme 'biodiversity'. India hosted the COP 11 to CBD during 2012 in Hyderabad and SEBS 2012, as the brand ambassador of COP 11, successfully showcased to the world the wide array of biodiversity in India and the conservation measures adopted thereof.

The state-of-the-art exhibition aboard the SEBS aims to create awareness on biodiversity of India, climate change and similar issues among various sections of the society, especially the students. The exhibition, thus, targets a wide range of audience including school and college students as well as teachers.

Of the 16 coaches of the SEBS, eight supported by MoEF, are solely dedicated to showcasing the myriad biodiversity spread across the bio-geographical zones of India. These include Trans-Himalaya & the Himalayas, the Gangetic Plain, North East India, the Desert & Semi-Arid Zone, the Western Ghats, the Deccan Peninsula, the Coasts & Islands. The exhibition also covers various other facets like marine, coastal, forest, microbial, agro biodiversity and their linkage with livelihoods besides challenges of conservation.

In rest of the rake, one coach has an exhibition on Climate Change, Biodiversity & Water, supported by HSBC. Exhibition on Green Technologies supported by UL India and exhibits on Climate Change supported by Swiss Embassy are put up in another coach. Yet another coach presents an exhibition on Energy Conservation, supported by PCRA. In one coach, a Kids Zone has been created for kids to indulge in fun-filled activities, games and puzzles in science, mathematics and environment.

Further, the popular VASCSC Joy of Science (JOS) lab, supported by Indus Towers, is put up in a dedicated coach. In this hands-on lab, students can perform various experiments and activities to understand concepts in environment, science and mathematics in an interesting manner.

Training facility is provided in a coach for orientation of teachers. Education Departments and schools are encouraged to send their teachers to participate in the Orientation Programmes. For details and registration, contact the Manager aboard the train.

At each halt of SEBS, activities are planned in advance to engage visitors across different ages to reinforce the message of SEBS and these include the exciting and much sought-after Outreach Programme conducted in local schools / institutions along with interesting activities on the railway platforms. Institutions and local schools associated with the MoEF's National Environment Awareness Programme (NEAP) and National Green Corps (NGC) also help in reaching out. In addition, informative take-away material is made available for wider distribution amongst schools and visitors.

The exhibition reflects the wisdom and the hard-work of the knowledge partners who have contributed to bring forth this exhibition. MoEF has partnered with the DST for putting up the exhibition on biodiversity. Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Ahmedabad along with the knowledge partners and Vikram A Sarabhai Community Science Centre (VASCSC), Ahmedabad have developed and put up this unique exhibition-on-wheels. HSBC, UL India and Indus Towers have supported part of the exhibitions and complementary activities.

VASCSC has been entrusted by DST with the task of coordinating the SEBS across India. VASCSC's team of well-qualified, trained and highly motivated Science Communicators travelling with the train explain and interpret the exhibition, answers queries, facilitate the visitors and conduct complementary activities.

The exhibition is open to all but primarily targets students and teachers. More information is available on the website www.sciencexpress.in.

For visit to the exhibition or any queries, please send an email to sciencexpress@gmail.com or contact the Manager aboard the train on 09428405407. School students can participate in the Joy of Science (JOS) Lab in small batches of up to 25 students, by prior registration. For participating in the JOS Lab, please send an email to vascsc.jos@gmail.com or contact the Lab in-charge on 09428405408.

Team Science Express solicits cooperation from all the concerned departments, media, institutions and individuals in giving wider publicity to this prestigious exhibition-on-wheels, so that a large number of visitors are benefited and to make the programme a grand success.

Please Note

- The exhibition is open to all and there is no entry fee.
- Not allowed on the Science Express: Items like mobiles, cameras, bags, match-boxes, cigarettes, beedis, tobacco, any liquid, and any sharp pointed objects.
- Venue: Railway station of the respective city.
- Timing: 10:00 am to 5:00 pm.
- Refer schedule for the dates at respective halts.
- Visitors may have to wait in long queue, hence advised to bring along drinking water and cap.