

Ninth Phase of Science Express to Criss-Cross India till September this Year Curtain Raiser

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Science Express Climate Action Special (SECAS II) will be flagged off on February 17 at 11 a.m from Safdarjung Railway station in Delhi. Five Ministers - Minister of State (Independent Charge) of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, Shri Anil Madhav Dave, Ministers of Science and Technology, Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Minister of State, Shri Y.S Choudhary and Ministers of Railways, Shri Suresh Prabhu and Minister of State, Shri Manoj Sinha, are likely to be present at the flagging off ceremony. After the flag-off, the SECAS will be open for public viewing at Delhi Cantonment Railway Station on February 18 and February 19. Following the public viewing, the train will embark upon its journey across the country.

The SECAS II will run from February 17 to September 8 2017, culminating its journey at Gandhinagar. During its journey, the Science Express will cover over 19,000 km, and will be exhibited at 68 stations across 20 states of the country. During this seven month journey, SECAS will roll into Tripura for the first time.

Science Express, redesigned as SECAS, intends to contribute towards increasing understanding of the science of climate change, the observed and anticipated impacts, and different possible responses. It is an innovative mobile science exhibition mounted on a 16 coach AC train, which has been custom-built for Department of Science & Technology (DST) by Indian Railways. This unique mobile exhibition was first launched in October 2007 by DST. Since then it has travelled across India eight times, traveling about 1,42,000 km and exhibiting at 455 locations. More than 1.50 crore people visited the exhibition over 1,602 exhibition days. Science Express has become the largest, the longest running and the most visited mobile science exhibition. It has six entries in the Limca Book of Records.

The exhibition will convey a message about Climate Change and will also be a good opportunity to generate a dialogue and discussion. The state-of-the-art exhibition on board the SECAS aims to create awareness among various sections of society, as to how climate change can be combated through mitigation and adaptation.

Exhibitions in 8 out of the 16 coaches of SECAS have been developed by MoEFCC. Exhibits and activities by DST and DBT have been put up in the remaining 8 coaches.

Some of the broad themes of the coaches include - Underlying reasons for climate change, with a key message that the present change in the climate is due to human activities; impact of climate change and ways to reduce it; adaptation strategies and adaptation measures being taken by India; mitigation and various programmes implemented; international negotiations for climate change and focus on concept of lifestyle choices on what one can do to "Increase the Handprint and decrease your Footprint".

The exhibition is exclusively devoted to information, case studies and material related to various aspects of climate change, the underlying science, impact, adaptation activities, mitigation solutions and policy approaches in a manner that is easy to understand and interesting, not just for school students, but also for the masses.

The SECAS II is a unique collaborative initiative of Department of Science & Technology (DST), Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC), Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Ministry of Railways and Vikram A Sarabhai Community Science Centre (VASCSC). MoEFCC has asked Wildlife Institute of India (WII) to extend support in the endeavour.

Science Express Phase I to IV showcased cutting-edge research in Science and Technology being carried out worldwide. Phase V to VII was based on the theme of biodiversity. As 'Science Express Biodiversity Special (SEBS)', it showcased the rich biodiversity of India and its conservation measures. Phase VIII as 'Science Express Climate Action Special (SECAS)' highlighted the global challenge of climate change.

The previous three phases of Science Express were rolled out as a joint initiative of DST and MoEFCC as 'Biodiversity Special' and showcased the myriad biodiversity of India. Thus, it was rational to shift the focus to the theme of climate change, as it will affect the biodiversity of not just India, but the entire globe as well.

Queries on the visit to the exhibition can be sent through an email to scienceexpress@gmail.com, or contact the team aboard the train on 09428405407. The exhibition is open to all and there is no entry fee for the exhibition. The railway station of the city will be the venue of the exhibition. The timing of the exhibition will be from 10 a.m to 5 p.m.

Items such as mobiles, cameras, bags, match-boxes, cigarettes, beedis, tobacco, water bottles, any liquid, and any sharp/ pointed objects are not allowed on the Science Express.

Background:

Climate Change is an important environmental issue, with many short-term and long-term impacts. From shifting weather patterns that threaten food production, to rising sea levels that increase the risk of catastrophic flooding, the impact of climate change are not just global in scope and unprecedented in scale, but they also severely affect more, the poor and marginalized people. However, there is very little understanding about climate change and its impact.

The Paris Agreement entered into force on November 4, 2016. The central aim of the Paris Agreement is to strengthen the global response to the threat of climate change and to strengthen the ability of countries to deal with the impacts of climate change. The first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA 1) took place in Marrakech in November 2016. The Conference successfully demonstrated to the world that the implementation of the Paris Agreement is underway and the constructive spirit of multilateral cooperation on climate change continues.

