

PRESS BRIEF:

Science Express- Biodiversity Special Flagging-off on World Environment Day, 5 June 2012

India is recognised as one of the megadiverse countries, rich in biodiversity and associated traditional knowledge. With just 2.4% of the land area, India accounts for nearly 7% of the recorded species even while supporting almost 18% of human population. India has a long history of conservation and sustainable use of natural resources and is a party to many international environmental conventions including UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

The current decade (2011-2020) has been declared as the *United Nations Decade on Biodiversity* and *United Nations Decade for Deserts and the Fight against Desertification*. India will be hosting the Eleventh meeting of the Conference of the Parties (CoP-11) to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), from 8- 19 October 2012 in Hyderabad (Andhra Pradesh) and engage over 10,000 delegates from 192 countries. Therefore, it is considered an opportune time to showcase the wide array of biodiversity in the country, the threats to the rich biodiversity and the conservation measures adopted thereof.

The COP 11 This CBD COP 11 assumes immense importance considering that it is being held in the 40th anniversary year of Stockholm Conference held in 1972, 20th anniversary year of Rio Earth Summit held in 1992, and 10th anniversary year of World Sustainable Summit held in 2002. This would also be the first CoP in the UN Decade on Biodiversity 2011-2020.

The 'Science Express – Biodiversity Special (SEBS)':

In an effort to create widespread awareness on the unique biodiversity of the country, Ministry in partnership with the Department of Science & Technology will be running the train 'Science Express – Biodiversity Special (SEBS)' that will cover over 100 stations in two years. Science Express- Biodiversity Special is being **flagged off on 5 June 2012**. For the year 2012 the train will culminate in Gandhinagar on 22 December. The train will be stationed at Hyderabad from 9-19 October 2012, during the CBD COP11, so that the COP delegates/dignitaries are able to experience the rich biodiversity of our country.

Of the 16 coaches of the Science Express- Biodiversity Special, eight are solely dedicated to showcasing the myriad biodiversity spread across the bio-geographical zones- the Trans-Himalaya & the Himalayas, the Gangetic Plain, North East India, the Desert & Semi-Arid Zone, the Western Ghats, the Deccan Peninsula, the Coasts & Islands. These 8 coaches highlighting the biodiversity across the bio-geographic zones in the country and will focus on range of Biological diversity, critically endangered species (IUCN Red list), biodiversity hotspots; domesticated biodiversity (agriculture, animal husbandry); biodiversity & livelihoods, bio-culture; threats/challenges (climate change, other anthropogenic); conservation measures; success stories/experiences/ unique stories. The exhibition also covers various other facets like marine, coastal, forest, microbial, agro biodiversity and their linkage with livelihoods besides challenges of conservation.

Three other coaches have exhibits on Climate Change, Energy and Water conservation. Legacy of Science Express showcasing the most popular exhibits from the previous phases has been exhibited in

one coach. The Joy of Science (JOS) Lab is housed in another coach, in which students can perform various experiments and activities to understand concepts in biodiversity, climate change, environment and science. A conference room-cum-training facility is also provided in a coach primarily for the purpose of capacity building of teachers.

The Journey:

Between 5 June 2012 & 22 Dec 2012, the train will travel almost 18,000 km, halting for 3-4 days at each of the 52 locations. The exhibition is expected to be visited by more than 15 lakh visitors but indirectly it is likely to engage over 50 lakh people. HSBC, the Swiss Embassy, Nestle, PCRA and Indus Towers have supported some of the exhibits and complimentary activities in 4 coaches.

Reaching out:

Wherever the train travels, activities for being planned to engage visitors across different ages to reinforce the message of SEBS. Specific Outreach Programme will be conducted at local schools and institutions associated with the Ministry's National Environment Awareness Programme (NEAC) and National Green Corps (NGC). In addition to this informative take-away material will also be made available for wider distribution among visitors.

Partners:

The train reflects the wisdom and the hard-work of the knowledge partners who have contributed immensely to bring forth the essence of 'biodiversity' and conservation practices in our country. Vikram A Sarabhai Community Science Centre (VASCSC) and Centre for Environment Education (CEE), Ahmedabad along with the lead knowledge partners - Bombay Natural History Society, Centre for Ecological Sciences, Indian Institute of Science, G. B. Pant Institute of Himalayan Environment and Development, Indian Council of Forestry Research and Education, National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management, National Museum of Natural History, Wildlife Institute of India and Wildlife Trust of India, and several others have contributed to give final touches to this unique exhibition on wheels at the Gandhinagar railway station.

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Science Express - Biodiversity Special Schedule
(5 June 2012 – 22 December 2012)

| Sr. No. | Station | Exhibition Dates | Sr. No. | Station | Exhibition Dates |
|---------|-----------------------|----------------------|---|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 1 | Delhi Safdurjung | 05 - 07 June 12 | 29 | Mumbai CST | 16 – 19 Sep 12 |
| 2 | Patna | 09 – 10 June 12 | 30 | Habibganj (Bhopal) | 21 – 24 Sep 12 |
| 3 | Rangiya | 12 – 13 June 12 | 31 | Madanmahal (Jabalpur) | 25 – 28 Sep 12 |
| 4 | Mariani (Jorhat) | 14 – 16 June 12 | 32 | Nagpur | 30 Sep – 03 Oct 12 % |
| 5 | Dibrugrah | 17 – 20 June 12 | 33 | Kazipet | 04 – 08 Oct 12\$ |
| 6 | Dimapur | 21 – 22 June 12 | 34 | Secunderabad | 09 – 19 Oct 12 |
| 7 | Kamakhya (Guwahati) | 23 – 26 June 12 | 35 | Sewagram (Wardha) | 20 – 22 Oct 12 |
| 8 | Siliguri | 27 – 29 June 12 | 36 | Durg | 23 – 25 Oct 12 |
| 9 | Malda Town | 30 June – 03 July 12 | 37 | Bilaspur | 26 – 29 Oct 12 |
| 10 | Howrah | 04 – 05 July 12 | 38 | Gaya | 31 Oct – 02 Nov 12 |
| 11 | Dhanbad | 06 – 09 July 12 | 39 | Gorakhpur Cantt | 03 – 06 Nov 12 |
| 12 | Ranchi | 10 – 13 July 12 | 40 | Lucknow | 07 – 10 Nov 12 |
| 13 | Rourkela | 14 – 17 July 12 | 41 | Haridwar | 11 – 12 & 14 Nov 12 |
| 14 | Sambalpur | 18 – 21 July 12 | 42 | Chandigarh | 15 – 18 Nov 12 |
| 15 | Cuttack | 22 – 25 July 12 | 43 | Ambala Cantt. | 19 – 21 Nov 12 |
| 16 | Berhampur | 26 – 29 July 12 | 44 | Udhampur | 22 – 25 Nov 12 |
| 17 | Visakhapatnam | 30 July – 02 Aug 12 | 45 | Ferozpur City | 26 – 28 Nov 12 |
| 18 | Vijayawada | 03 – 06 Aug 12 | 46 | Bhatinda | 29 Nov – 01 Dec 12 |
| 19 | Nellore | 07 – 10 Aug 12 | 47 | Delhi Cantt. | 02 – 05 Dec 12 |
| 20 | Chennai Central | 11 – 15 Aug 12* | 48 | Durgapura Jaipur | 06 – 09 Dec 12 |
| 21 | Kudal Nagar (Madurai) | 16 – 19 Aug 12 | 49 | Bhagat Ki Kothi (Jodhpur) | 10 – 13 Dec 12 |
| 22 | Kanyakumari | 20 – 23 Aug 12 | 50 | Barmer | 14 – 17 Dec 12 |
| 23 | Ernakulam (Cochin) | 24 Aug 12 | 51 | Ahmedabad | 19 – 21 Dec 12 |
| 24 | Kozhikode | 25 – 28 Aug 12 | 52 | Gandhinagar | 22 Dec 12 |
| 25 | Madgaon | 30 Aug – 02 Sep 12 | Note : * 15 Aug: Holiday – Independence Day % 02 Oct: Holiday – Gandhi Jayanti @ 13 Nov: Holiday – Diwali Festival \$ 08 Oct: Technical Holiday for Maintenance | | |
| 26 | Hubli | 03 – 06 Sep 12 | | | |
| 27 | Bellary | 07 – 10 Sep 12 | | | |
| 28 | Khadki (Pune) | 12 – 15 Sep 12 | | | |