

# Science as seen through Edinburgh

The ongoing international science festival is opening new avenues for children to explore and stay excited about how things work

by Shyama Krishna Kumar

**Bangalore:** Whoever says smart things don't sell, has never been to the Edinburgh International Science Festival. With thousands of children and parents clamouring to enter the venue at the sprawling Bharatiya City, at Chokkanahalli, the festival has sparked an academic revolution in Namma Bengaluru. Science will definitely never be the same again for the kids who have and will attend the festival over the next week.

The festival, that has been running in Edinburgh for almost three decades now, has been brought to India for the first time by mycity4kids, a website dedicated to children's activities. "We had identified the festival around three years ago, and since then have been wanting to bring the property to India, as nothing of this scale has ever been attempted in the country. Finally, this year,

along with Art Konnect, we have succeeded in bringing them to India," says Vishal Gupta, co-founder and managing director of mycity4kids.

With interactive zones, activity areas and lots of great information for young minds to soak in, the festival is already a big hit, and this despite the heavy rains which led the organisers to shut the festival down on Monday. The festival is back on track starting today. "We wanted to make sure all the safety aspects were in control before we re-opened the venue to the children. The activities will commence again from today," says Gupta.

While most of the workshops will be conducted by international facilitators from Edinburgh, there will also be Indian workshops for the children to learn from. Vishal Gupta hopes to take the event to other metros by next year, because of the huge response they've received



over the last three days. "There is a huge demand for it. We're overwhelmed by the response. We've had to turn away people because

of the huge numbers. So next year, we aim to make it bigger and better and hope to accommodate more people," says Gupta.

Children can take part in exciting activities that will let them break through the mental block that boring text books usually put up.

For example, the Emergency Room will give kids a chance to play doctor and work with experienced surgeons to look at mock accident patients,

identify what's wrong, and examine, study and understand the human anatomy. In the world of bubbles exhibit, kids can design their own bubble wands and even stand inside a giant bubble. At the forensic science stall, watch your kids turn into

## TICKET RATES

- Children (below 18 years): ₹500
- Adults: ₹300
- Family Pass (2 adults + 2 Children): ₹1,300

## FESTIVAL TIMINGS

- Monday to Friday
- For Schools: 10 am to 2 pm
- For Public: 4 pm to 8 pm
- Saturday and Sunday 11 am to 7 pm

international spies as they are taught the tricks of the trade, like using special powder to take fingerprints and learning how to create and

pass secret messages without being discovered, using only simple household items. And in one of the most exciting events happening at the festival, kids can use a specially designed version of Lego Mindstorm NXT technology, to build and programme robots. The list is virtually endless.

Over 50,000 children have attended the festival over the last three days and the numbers are expected to increase through the week. "Since the entire festival is an outdoor event, it would be good if parents kept in mind the various elements like extreme heat, and sudden showers and prepare for them before they get to the venue. Also, given the nature of the show, there will be a lot of waiting in queues. There's nothing we can do to change that really," says Gupta, as he ticks off a few things parents need to keep in mind while they bring their kids to the festival.