**Voice of the Blind**

**Fortnight e-bulletin**

**(Collection of news and informations of and for the blind)**

Compiled, Edited and circulated by National Federation of the Blind Karnataka

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64th issue

Period from 1st March to 15th March 2018

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**1. Editorial**

Dear readers,

We believe that this 64th issue of the “Voice of the Blind” will find you all best in health and spirit.

There is once again a delay of around 20 days in reaching this issue of the Voice of the Blind in your mailbox and this delay is beyond our control under the circumstances where we work with our meager mite and limited resources. We can only offer our sincere apology to make you again and again awaiting for the new issue of the voice of the blind.

During the reported period of 1st half of the month we observed two significant festival first is religious festival of Holy on 1st and 2nd March and second is International Women’s Day that is observed every year on 8th March.

The General Secretary NFB Karnataka extended a significant message to all women with visual disability across the country mentioning the ideology, commitment and strategy of National Federation of the blind towards promotion and protection of rights of all our visually impaired sisters and to promote and protect their socio economic entitlements.

We take this opportunity to reproduce above said message of Sri Gautam Agarwal General Secretary NFB Karnataka on this editorial page.

**Message of General Secretary NFB Karnataka on occasion of International Women's Day 2018**

All brothers and sisters, most of you may or some may not be aware of the fact that the International Women’s day observed for the first time on28th February 1909 in Newyork USA.

The international Women Conference of 1910 suggested March 8th to be the women’s day. After granting suffrage to women in 1917, the 8th March became National holiday in Russia.

The day then started to be observed subsequently in many socialist and communist countries following Russia

In 1975, UNO adopted it as international women’s day.

This is the day to recognize the contribution of women in all walks of life.

NFB has ever been proactive to voice the concerns of its visually impaired women.

As in our state around 40% of total population of visually impaired persons are women, hence NFB Karnataka is commemorating the International Women’s Day on 10th March in association with Narayana Netralaya Bangalore with a strong urge to the government for effective action that can enables our V.I. sisters to maximize their potential in all spheres of their lives and to have all those rights which their sighted counter parts enjoy.

 This year's UN International Women's Day theme is “Time is Now: Rural and urban activists transforming women’s lives”.

"I firmly believe that to build a fully inclusive, sustainable and resilient society, it is essential to address the unique needs of women and girls with disabilities and undertake measures to ensure their full and equal participation"

Many women and girls with disabilities face barriers such as lack of access to education, healthcare and productive employment. They are also more subject to violence and abuse; and those who face disaster or humanitarian emergencies are particularly vulnerable due to lack of accessible infrastructure, information and insufficient planning to understand and meet their needs.

It is critical that women with disabilities be engaged in the planning and delivery of all programs and services. For that to happen in a meaningful way, they must be encouraged and facilitated to assume leadership roles.

with this in view the National Federation of the Blind has recently formed the women committees at national and state level with the leadership of women with blindness. To establish a better understanding of barriers to women assuming leadership roles. An action plan to deal with barriers and discrimination preventing women from becoming leaders will be developed.

National and State women committees of NFB pushing for the empowerment, equality and transformation of women and children.

NFB Karnataka is engaged in collective action to ensure equality and transformation of women’s lives at all levels of societies.

There is still need to enhance the leadership capacity of visually impaired women and girls and to build their self-confidence. The NFB Karnataka as leading self help organization of the blind in the state still has the important task of pressing for more support and education of girls and women with visual impairment to have more of them in meaningful employment and decision-making positions.

Our governments must need to consider how to support girls with visual impairment to be properly educated. Governments must also ensure equality for women with visual impairment is a reality and not just talk.

Women and girls with visual impairment in developing countries like ours face many issues. Some examples of these issues are:

* Forced marriages, or the opposite of that, being denied the opportunity to marry and have a family, because family members take it upon themselves to determine her life.
* Inability to escape Female genital mutilation, because those who decide to escape it are often excommunicated from their families
* Being forced to be single mothers often with men not of their own choice, because family members think this to be a sure way of ensuring that the visually impaired woman has a caretaker in old age.

The list can be endless. Women’s organizations and governments must now come forward and bring out the women with disabilities, including those with visual impairment and set them on the path to realizing the fulfillment they worked hard to achieve over the decades.

We need to understand that unless the women with disabilities are not educated, children with disability are easily left out in education, they are denied family inheritance and in cultures where infanticide is silently practiced, it is those with disability who are done away with. We need to pull our efforts together to strengthen the position of girls and women with disabilities and we must remember to consider each disability separately, because the needs of each disability are different.

There are things which can be done to help them come to same level with other women in society. This however will only be possible when women with disability are specifically targeted. Since then when three years back the national and state women committees of NFB were established they helped women with visual impairment everywhere. It helped women with visual impairment to quickly come to the fore and participate actively in organizations of and for them.

Where earlier women are invisible in decision making process of NFB, as a result of establishment of special women committees at national and state level they are quickly becoming visible at all levels.

 I therefore propose that programmes be undertaken to support girls/women with visual impairment in education and employment, and for those who may not be able to attain formal employment; programmes to help them engage in self-employment and home making should be undertaken. If we want to think of a better world we must mitigate problems before they occur. We must also think of how to help those who are now suffering difficult living conditions because nothing was done when they were young or perhaps because the wrong things were done for them.

An example of wrong things being done is where people are kept in institutions without being taught any life skills and then being abandoned to fend for themselves at a later age. Such will very often end up in difficult life situations.

It is necessary to push towards positive growth that will enable women with disabilities to be independent and lead successful lives.

So for as our Karnataka state is concerned our sustained advocacy to address the concerns of our V.I. women has resulted in various positive outcomes for their multidimensional empowerment. Some of them may be illustrated as under

a. State government has made a provision to extend financial assistance of Rs.2000 per month to visually impaired mothers for up brining their babies. This assistance is available upto two kids and upto age of two year for each.

b. The state government also offers a marriage incentive of Rs.50,000 to the couple where a non disabled person marry to a disabled person.

c. As per the provision of right to persons with disability act the state government has also announced to give preference to women with disability in 5% reservation quota in allotment of land and houses under various schemes.

d. Many other enabling provisions are there for multi dimensional empowerment of our V.I. sisters at the level of state government, central government and NFB itself.

On this auspicious occasion of International women day I call upon all visually impaired women and girls to march forward to fight a battle for creating such a society where they realise their full potential in all spheres of life where their equality and dignity is respected.

With these words I extend my whole hearted greetings and best wishes for progress and wellbeing of all our V.I. sisters.

Thank you

Gautam Agarwal

General Secretary

**2. News from far & near**

**1. Kerala's first school for the deaf & hard of hearing to be upgraded**

The Government VHSS Deaf School in Thiruvananthapuram in Kerala has been sanctioned Rs 20 crore from the state government for improving its infrastructure and facilities. This is the first government school in the state for students who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Facilities will also be made hi-tech for students in classes 8 to 12.

The Kerala government wants to introduce equipment to make learning for the deaf and hard of hearing easier. They want to highlight their skills through education. Children who are deaf and hard of hearing need more visual aids to help them learn new things. The Kerala government will supply all that to the school.

A master-plan to improve the school has been handed over to the government. Two new blocks will also be built. The hostel building will also be renovated.

# 2. Sai Kaustav Dasgupta sets national record for fastest typing speed, proving disability is no barrier

Sai Kaustuv Dasgupta proves yet again that disability does not mean thelack of ability.

Dasgupta has set three records in 2018 for the fastest typing speed. This includes the Limca Book of Records, India Book of Records, and the Asia Book of Records for the fastest typing speed.

Dasgupta typed 24 words in one minute. This is a remarkable achievement as he has a 90% disability. He typed using just one finger of his left hand.

Dasgupta has Osteogenesis Imperfecta (Brittle Bone Disease). He has undergone more than 50 fractures. He also has a hearing impairment.

Despite being in a wheelchair, he has turned his disability into his greatest gift. He has won many national and international awards. He is also a graphic designer, singer, composer, and author of the book My Life, My Love, My Dear Swami. The book has been translated into nine Indian languages. His book was much appreciated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who sent him a letter.

As his right hand does not work, Dasgupta does graphic designing using a mouse with one finger of his left hand. He types on a virtual onscreen keyboard.

Dasgupta is also well known as a motivational speaker. His talk on TEDx has inspired millions of people around the world. He wants to motivate disabled people to overcome their challenges. He believes that if he has been able to

# 3. Disabled people share holiday stories at Enable Travel event in Bengaluru

From the charms of Karnataka to the lack of sign language interpreters at tourist sites, there was plenty of useful informationexchanged at ‘Travel Stories’. The Enable Travel event in Bengaluru, brought together people with disabilities to share their holiday stories!

Enable Travel, which is supported by leading tour operators, Cox and Kings, aims to promote accessible travel for people with disabilities. Since its launch in March 2017, Enable Travel has organized three such events. Going by the huge response from the disabled community at all these events, accessible travel has major potential in India.

Enable Travel claims to be India's **first Accessible Holiday Specialist** It addresses the travel needs of disabled people in many ways. There are tours put together for disabled people by people with disabilities.

India alone has 23 million disabled people, but where are they? There are no platforms for disabled people to come together. Mobility and accessibility is the biggest hitch for a disabled person to explore and know the world better. That is when ‘Enable Travel’ comes to the rescue, as a tour guide – Debolin Sen, Head, Enable Travel

### Many accessible facilities for disabled travellers

The company offers all the facilities to make it comfortable for disabled people to travel. They have vans for wheelchair users, trained drivers and other accessible equipment required to make it a hassle-free experience.

The Enable Travel event in Bengaluru saw a large number of young disabled people. . A market that tour operators should look at targeting seriously. Events like Travel Stories aim to do just that. Enable Travel wanted to get a sense of which cities disabled people want to visit and the kind of experiences they are looking for.

There were over 40 people with disabilities present to share their experiences. Many of them had already been on accessible holidays organized by Enable Travel. Their happy stories helped convey a sense of optimism and confidence among the wannabe disabled travellers.

‘Travel Stories’ has held two such events earlier. The first one was in Delhi, where they held a food walk for the blind through Chandni Chowk.

Next on the agenda is an international experience. This is likely to be a cruise to Thailand. It has all the makings of a fun event with plenty of sightseeing, games and good food.

Given how widespread and diverse the disabled community is in India, bringing them together is a challenge. Enable Travel relies on social networking sites and WhatsApp to do this.

The government of India is taking steps to promote accessible travel for people with disabilities at a macro-level. For instance, airports are made accessible for those on wheelchairs. But at a micro-level, there is a long way to go. Specialized equipment has to be provided so disabled people can travel freely inside cities – Debolin Sen, Head, Enable Travel

Some of the exciting packages that lie ahead for disabled travellers include trips to Europe, South Africa, New Zealand and the United States.The Enable Travel team is geared up to promote tourism for disabled people. They ask – ‘Why should only the abled have all the fun?’

# 4. PlexTalk device is helping blind students in Gujarat prepare for board exams better

With the exam season coming closer, blind and low vision students of Class 10 in Surat in Gujarat are turning to PlexTalk for help. This is a device that has been developed especially for blind students.

PlexTalk is a device that works on audio principles. It reads out audio books to blind and low vision students. This helps reduce the large amounts of time they spend on preparing for exams.

PlexTalk also has pre-installed audio books. Blind students say the device is helping them in a big way in preparing for the exams. They feel more confident about doing well in their papers.

Students say that preparations have become easier with PlexTalk. They can listen to the audio books at any time, or even record an entire book.

PlexTalk has an extensive storage capacity. This means blind and low vision students can save many books at the same time, without running out of storage space.

The device comes with a 16 to 32 GB internal memory. It also has a provision for an external memory card to be installed for superior memory capacity.

PlexTalk reads books in both Hindi and English.

**5. On World Hearing Day, focus on early detection of hearing loss for effective treatment**

Today is marked as World Hearing Day across the world.

Its a day that the World Health Organization (WHO) is drawing attention towards the anticipated rise in the number of people with hearing loss across the world. The theme is Hear the future.

Experts advice that early detection of hearing problems is essential to prevent hearing and speech-related issues.

Hearing and speech are inter-related. A child with difficulty in listening will also have speech- related issues. He or she will not be able to speak clearly.

However, by detecting the problem at an early age, treatment can be done. This way hearing issues can be corrected.

This is why, cochlear implants are more effective when performed at an early age.

To detect loss of hearing in a person or child a simple machine is used.

It is called the Otto Acoustic Equipment (OAE). It helps detect hearing problems.

Countries like the United States and the United Kingdom have been using the OAE for several decades. The machine has come to India recently.

The cost of the device is Rs 2 lakh. It is very effective in successful detection of hearing-related disorders.

The device can help change the lives of thousands of children. It can help detect any hearing issues and get treatment and therapy on time.

The age between 0 to 3 years is considered the most critical when it comes to detection and correction of hearing loss.

In this period the child starts to identify the sounds and words in the surroundings and that helps in shaping the development of speech.

Experts say that when a baby is born, the mother and family members start talking to the child. This stimulates brain development in the child.

# 6. Half of Tamil Nadu's government buildings to be made accessible for disabled people by 2019

The Tamil Nadu government has committed to making 74 government buildings in the state accessible for disabled people by 2019.

The government has appointed a team to look into this issue. The team has to submit a report in one month's time. Government-run hospitals, public schools, colleges and government buildings will be included.

People with disabilities have a difficult time when they enter these buildings. The state government has not taken the required measures under the Accessible India Campaign to make these buildings accessible for people with disabilities.

The State Commissioner for People with Disabilities **V Arun Roy**, has said that at least 50% of government buildings must be made accessible for disabled people by 2019. This move has come after a direct order from the Supreme Court.

Some of the main buildings that will be audited in Chennai are the Secretariat building, Government Multi-Super Specialty Hospital, Dr. MGR Medical University, University of Madras, Office of the Commissioner of Police, to name a few.

# 7. Chennai’s Marina & Elliot beaches will soon get pathways for physically disabled visitors

The popular Marina and Elliot beaches in Chennai will soon get separatepathways for people with disabilities.

The **Greater Chennai Corporation** plans to undertake the construction.

This has been planned so that physically disabled visitors can visit the beach like everyone else.

It is difficult to move a wheelchair on the beach sand. The pathways will remove that challenge.

The pathways will start from the shore and go up to the sea line.

The work will be funded by the central government’s **Swadesh Darshan** scheme.

The cost of making pathways is estimated to be Rs 80 lakh for each beach.

Once they are made, Chennai will be the first city in India to have disabled friendly pathways.

The government of Tamil Nadu is all set to make the state more attractive for tourists within India.

# 8. Disabled students in Coimbatore have teachers as scribes

Several disabled students appeared for their class 12 board exams in Coimbatore this week.

The disabled students were able to give the papers with ease with the help ofscribes or exam writers.

Around 40 disabled students from Coimbatore city are appearing for the class 12 board exam this year.

They are getting a great help from teachers, who act as scribes.

These disabled students include those with vision-related disabilities andstudents with dyslexia.

Earlier, there was a rule that did not allow teachers to act as scribes for the subjects that they taught.

However, the rule has been changed. This was after it was realized that for exams of subjects like physics and accountancy, scribes need to know the symbols well.

The scribes for the board exams have been appointed by the education department.

The exam writers are being paid the same as examiners

Scribes are used by blind students and those with low vision or dyslexia to write their exams.

A scribe reads out the question for the student from the question paper.

The student then dictates the answer which is written down by the writer.

The option of using a scribe makes it convenient for blind students to appear for their exams.

# 9. Divyangjan Sashakti Karan Mela

Viklang Sahara Samiti Delhi is keen to start this “Awareness Generation & Publicity Scheme with regard to “DIVYANGJAN SASHAKTI KARAN MELA” for two days.

DIVYANGJAN SASHAKTIKARAN MELA aims to raise awareness among persons with disabilities, their families, and civil society with the goal to create a road map for their inclusive development and also it may provide the chance to other stakeholder to know about disability and its related factor so as to work on it.

It will provide opportunities and awareness to all disabled students and help in strengthening them for their overall growth with regards to making them stable in the mainstream society.

Beneficiaries

Children and adults with intellectual disability, Autism, cerebral palsy , Visual, Speech & Hearing, loco motors and multiple disabilities and their families. This awareness plan is aimed to approach the larger society.

## Event Details

* Starts on: Saturday, 31 Mar 2018 at 10:00 AM
* Ends on: Sunday, 01 Apr 2018 at 05:00 PM
* City: New Delhi
* Location: Shaheed Bhagat Singh Stadium, Mangolpuri
* Event Charges: Free
* Wheelchair Accessible: Yes
* Sign-Language Interpreter Available: Yes
* [Registration Link](http://www.event.vssdngo.org/registration/)

## Organizer Details

* Organizer Name: Viklang Sahara Samiti Delhi (VSSD)
* Organizer Phone: 8585924133,011279157
* Organizer Email: event.vssd@gmail.com
* Organizer Website: <http://www.vssdngo.org/>

# 10. How to make your office space inclusive for disabled employees

Offices and workspaces can be made accessible for employees with disabilities or for a disabled person, who is working from home independently.

All it takes is a little consideration and adequate use of resources to create an inclusive workplace.

Just a few things need to be kept in mind to understand the requirements of an accessible work area.

First, analyze the extent of disability and the basic working needs of the person with the disability.

Find out the extent of customization needed to enable the disabled person to work comfortably and independently.

A certain area is required for wheelchair users to move around easily. Find that out before you plan the layout of furniture such as tables, chairs, and file cabinets.

The width of the doorways should be enough to enable easy movement of mobility devices through them.

Conference or meeting rooms should be designed to optimize use of sound.

Contrasting colors on walls and floors can help people with low vision to better understand the layout of the area.

Keeping wires hidden and out of the way is important.

Use of technology is a must in an inclusive office. This includes speech-to-text technology, screen readers, to name a few.

There are so many things that can be done to make an office accessible for disabled people. All it needs is some effort and planning.

# 11. Rare tooth-in-the-eye surgery enables Bengaluru woman to regain vision

A 35-year-old woman from Bengaluru was suffering from corneal blindness in both eyes for nearly a decade. Now thanks to a unique surgery, she has recovered her vision. The surgery involved inserting a tooth into both her corneas.

The unique surgery is called tooth-in-the-eye or Modified Osteo-Odonto-Keratoprosthesis (MOOKP). It was done by a team of corneal surgeons, dentists and anesthetists from the well known Sankara Eye Hospital.

The woman had lost her vision due to a drug reaction. She also suffered from severe dry eyes.

In the surgery, the patient’s own tooth was harvested and made into an optical cylinder. This was later inserted into the cornea of both her eyes. The eyes were then covered with an overlying membrane. Light passes through this cylinder. This allows the patient to visualize objects.

The total procedure took nine months to complete. It involved three surgeries with three months between each of them. At the end of the final procedure, the patient had regained 80% of her functional vision.

She is delighted that she is able to perform her daily activities independently after nearly 10 years.

# 12. Escalators at Surat railway station make accessible travel a reality for elderly, disabled people

Goodbye to accessibility issues at Surat railway station! The Western Railways has launched new escalators to enable accessible travel for senior citizens and disabled people. This will help them reach different platforms of the station easily.

At the Old Parcel Office, there is an escalator near platform 1 to help passengers move to platforms 2, 3 and 4 easily. This comes as a huge relief to thousands of passengers who use the Surat railway station on a daily basis. A lift has also been built inside the railway station to bring accessible travel to people using wheelchairs.

The job of building escalators was earlier given to a contractor who was not working quickly. After complaints from commuters, the Western Railway decided to change the contractor and speed up the work.

Railway authorities claim passengers are extremely happy about the measures introduced to make accessible travel a reality.

# 13. Excess intake of Vitamin A can lead to a rare eye disease, called Stargardt disease

The health problems caused by the lack of Vitamin A are well known. Not so well known is that excess of Vitamin A can also cause problems.

Excess Vitamin A in the body can lead to Stargardt disease. Its a condition characterised by progressive macular degeneration that leads to blindness. Stargardt disease affects about one in 10,000 people. It is different from the macular degeneration seen in elderly people.

Stargardt disease is caused by an inherited disorder. In this disorder, Vitamin A collects in the eye and turns toxic. The damage is progressive and leads to partial or complete blindness. Frequent eye check-ups are recommended for children.

### Signs & prevention

Signs of Stargardt disease set in from an early age. It starts causing vision loss from childhood. In some cases, the signs can be seen during adolescence. It results in macular dystrophy and degeneration of the eye muscles.

Early detection is the only way to save a patient’s sight. However, the signs are often misunderstood by parents. They think that their child’s vision is getting affected because of over-use of mobile phones, computers, or because of watching too much television.

Signs of Stargardt disease are loss of central vision in both eyes, formation of hazy spots in one’s field of vision, increased sensitivity to bright lights and colour blindness.

Children and adolescents diagnosed with the disease are asked to wear dark glasses when they step out into bright light. They are also asked to include more fish, green leafy vegetables and nuts in their diet.

# 14. ‘I inspire’ event to motivate students with disabilities

An outdoor sports activity was held for children with disabilities in Hyderabad this week. Called I Inspire, the event was organized by Wonders on Wheels (WOW) and Colors Pinkathon at Hayath Nagar in Hyderabad.

Children with disabilities got together at the event for a variety of sports and fun games.

The aim was to inspire and motivate children with disabilities who show extraordinary spirit and courage in their day-to-day lives.

The event was filled with laughter and color. The children showed great sportsmanship in motivating and congratulating each other.

Many outdoor games were held like a walking race with and without crutches. There was also a Manual Wheelchair Run. The location was Vegesna Foundation at Kuntloor village at Hayath Nagar.

# 15. Sports & Youth Affairs Ministry organizes competition for students with disabilities

To promote sports among students with disabilities, the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports organized a sports competition for students with disabilities at Balrampur in Uttar Pradesh. The event was organized under the Khelo India Scheme of the central government.

The Special Olympics India team from Chhattisgarh supported the event. Over 150 students with disabilities from Balrampur took part.

Students took part in events like football, badminton, 50-meter race, relay race and a 100-meter race.

Participants enjoyed the event. Many of them loved the chance to meet other students with disabilities.

The Sports and Youth Affairs Ministry plans to organize such events every year, given the great enthusiasm shown by students with disabilities.

# 16. Special camp to be held for people with disabilities in Coimbatore

The Department of People with Disabilities in Coimbatore district will organize aspecial screening camp this year to address the problems faced by the disabled people living in the district.

The camp will be organized in the summer months. It will include all the different regions that come under the district of Coimbatore.

There are many problems being faced by the disabled people living in this area. Over 20% of the disabled population here is yet to get identification cards. These cards are important as it entitles them to benefits from the Tamil Nadu government.

A survey done in one region alone showed that around 350 people with disabilities are yet to get ID cards.

Officials from various government departments will take part in this special camp. It will be a platform for people with disabilities to talk about their grievances at one place. They will not have to move around from one government office to another. They can also meet officials directly to get an answer to their problems.

More than 9,000 disabled people above the age of 18 years are getting their pensions from the government through the revenue department. Five thousand people are getting benefits from the department of people with disabilities.

# 17. With Soundscape app, people who are blind or have low vision can explore the world

Microsoft has created an app called Soundscape that is empowering people who are blind or have low vision to explore the world around them. Its a research projectavailable on iOS and iPhone in the United States and the United Kingdom.

Through a 3D audio experience, Soundscape app enriches the perception of one's surroundings. It helps the user get to where he or she wants to do. This is of great benefit for people with vision impairments, for whom going to meet friends, or exploring a new city can be a frightening experience.

The Soundscape app enables the user to set audio signals at familiar destinations or landmarks. It then uses 3D audio cues to improve the ambient awareness as the user makes his or her way to the destination.

By connecting a stereo headset, the user can explore the outdoor world with more independence. Due to the 3D audio, the user can build a mental image of what is around.

Soundscape has several useful features. This includes the ability to run in the background while other programs are being used. It can also be used along withother navigation support methods such as guide dogs and canes. Soundscape helps the user stay aware of their location by calling out roads and landmarks.

**18. Most parents do not get kids screened for hearing loss, says study**

A recent study claims that around 5 to 6 newborn babies in every 1,000 have some kind of hearing defect.

The study was conducted by Cochlear India.

The study says parents show alack of initiative in getting their children's hearing checked. This leads to lifelong hearing loss.

It was found that although many parents can sense the existence of a hearing problem in their child, they do not seek treatment.

Experts say that it is vital to detect hearing related problems at an early age and get them treated. Hearing is related to speech development in a child.

The speech or communication of children is greatly impacted by sounds around them.

The study surveyed a group of parents, based on which data was analyzed.

It was found that 84.1% parents knew that children should be tested for hearing loss. They also realized the child needed medical help at birth.

However, only 38.9 % parents took their children for screening and tests.

Most mothers are unaware that children born with hearing loss can hear again.

This highlights the need for awareness to be created regarding hearing test and cochlear screening.

Parents should be more alert in detecting hearing disorders in children.

Timely detection and help can help thousands of children to hear again and communicate.

# 19. Climbing championship for people with vision impairments in March

The Mountaineering Association of Jammu and Kashmir is going to organize thefirst-ever National Sport Climbing Championshipfor visually impaired climbers. This will be held on 27 and 28 March, 2018 at the Sprawling Buds School in Bantalab.

The number of blind and low vision climbers is likely to be around 300. The response has been very positive, say the organizers.

Prizes will be distributed to the first eight positions instead of the usual first three positions. There will be two categories held, one for boys' and the other for girls'. Various organizing committees have been formed to make sure the championship is held smoothly.

The Jammu and Kashmir State Sports Council is sponsoring the climbing championship for people with vision impairments.

# 20. Bhubaneswar, Sambalpur, & Vishakhapatnam railway stations have wheelchair ramps

To help passengers with disabilities board trains easily, the East Coast Railway has introduced mobile wheelchair ramps at three main stations. These stations are Bhubaneswar, Sambalpur and Visakhapatnam railway Stations.

The East Coast Railway has designed the ramp. They can be carried easily. Theservice is free.

Passengers who want to use the wheelchair ramps will have to go to theWheelchair Section near the office of the Chief Ticket Inspector at these stations.

The East Coast Railway is planning to introduce wheelchair ramps at other important stations soon.

# 21. Twins with albinism are using fashion to change attitudes towards this disability

Rosemary and Christina Alubankudi Ajiboye are from New York. The twins, who are 24 years old, love fashion. They also have albinism. Their aim is to make people with albinism proud of the skin they were born in. They are doing this through fashion.

The chances of twins being born with albinism are very rare. Both Rosemary and Christina were born with this genetic condition. Albinism is caused by partial or complete lack of melanin. Melanin is the pigment that gives hair, skin and eyes their color.

They faced some discrimination in school. Things changed when they went to college. There people were more open-minded.

Their message to people with albinism is to embrace their skin and beauty. They want to tell them to improve themselves to gain confidence.

Rosemary and Christina have been hooked to fashion since they were kids. Now they have taken to blogging about their outfits as a creative outlet.

Going ahead, they plan to start their own fashion brand to show more of albinism in the fashion industry.

# 22. Nepal to start trekking trail for the elderly and disabled people at Pokhara!

Nepal takes a big step towards making accessible travel a reality! The country will launch it’s first trekking trail in Pokhara for people with disabilities and the elderly.

This 1.3-km trail is an attempt to attract the elderly and disabled people to enjoy a trek in the mountains.

The new trail will be launched during a three-day International Conference on Accessible Adventure on 29 March, 2018 at Lake City.

The conference is being organized by International Development Institute, a company based in the United States. More than 100 participants from Nepal, and other parts of the world, will attend.

The head of the Nepal Tourism Board (NTB), Deepak Raj Joshi, has said that disabled people are unable to travel to many parts of the world due to the lack of accessible places. Few tourism sports cater to people with disabilities.

The trekking trail in Pokhara is an attempt to change that. By making it accessible, people can travel regardless of their disability or age.

Studies have confirmed that a large number of disabled people want to travel. Their plans are severely affected due to the lack of accessibility.

Nepal Tourism is trying to change that by making big attractions like its mountains accessible for the elderly and disabled people. So invest in some trekking clothes and get ready for Pokhara!

# 23. After a long battle, Goa government department finally appoints disabled person

The Directorate of Health Services (DHS) in Goa has appointed a disabled person as an attendant at its Panaji office.

The State Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities, Anuradha Joshi, gave the order. Just how hard it is for people with disabilities to get a job in the government sector is highlighted in this incident.

In this case, the employee, who has a loco-motor disability, was offered a job in the DHS in September 2016. One month later, the offer was cancelled. No explanation was given to the disabled applicant.

Ms Joshi has criticized the DHS for harassing the applicant in this manner. Only after she intervened in the matter, did things change. The DHS offered the applicant a position at the sub-district hospital in Ponda.

In 2015, the DHS had promised that people with disabilities would be given jobs in their sector. This included the deaf and hard of hearing, the blind, and people with other types of disabilities.

# 24. New VizWiz database aims to teach computers to give blind people the information they need

Computers find it hard to answer questions about an image. This is an important skill as it could help blind people with daily life.

There are apps that blind people can useto take a photo, record a question like -'What is the color of this shirt?' or 'When does this packet of milk expire?’ They can then ask volunteers for the answers. However, the images are often not well framed, or poorly focused, or lack the information needed to answer the question. This is because the photographers are not able to see.

Computer vision systems could help out by removing images that are not suitable. They can ask the photographer to take the image again. However, this is something that machines cannot do right now. This is due to the lack of a significant data set of real-world images that can be used to train them.

A team of researchers in Texas in the United States is working to change this. They have published a database of 31,000 images. The images come with questions and answers about them. The data set comes from an existing app called VizWiz. This has been developed to help blind people.

### How VizWiz app works

With the app, a blind person can take a picture, record a question verbally, and send them both to a team of volunteers who answer as best as they can. The app VizWiz has many shortcomings. Volunteers are not always available. Also, the images do not always make an answer possible.

The researchers in Texas have tried to find a solution to these problems. They analyzed the photos gathered by VizWiz from users. The team removed photos that had personal details such as credit card information, addresses, or nudity.

They presented the images and questions to workers and asked them to give an answer made up of a short sentence. The team gathered 10 answers for each image to check for consistency.

These 31,000 images, questions, and answers make up the new VizWiz database, which has been made available to the public.

The team hopes to encourage others to develop more generalized solutions to help blind people. The aim is to offer an opportunity to develop assistive technologies that break down accessibility barriers for blind people.

# 25. Maharashtra education board allows student with ADHD to use laptop for board exam

The Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) board in Maharashtra has allowed Anurag Thombare, a student from New Panvel, towrite his board exam using a laptop.

Hombre’s school had written to the board seeking permission for Anurag to use a typing machine. The board went one step further. It said Anurag could use a laptop.

Anurag suffers from a learning disability called Attention Deficit Hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), He also has a visual perception disorder.

ADHD is a medical condition where a person has differences in brain development and brain activity. This affects attention, the ability to sit still, and self-control.

In 2016, the Maharashtra government had introduced a resolution for Children with Special Needs (CWSN). The resolution states that with the permission of state board officials, CWSN provisions can be made available to those in need.

The exam center has arranged a laptop for Anurag, who cannot write properly. His father started teaching him how to type, when he was just six years old. He scored 82.6% in his class 10 board exams, for which he was assigned a writer.

The HSC board has asked exam centers to provide a laptop or computer to disabled students. There should be no Internet connection or information saved on the computer or laptop. After writing the exams, all answers need to be saved in PDF format by the exam center. This has to be deleted later from the computer so that no edits are made to it.

# 26. Javed Abidi, pioneer of India's disability rights movement, passes away

Javed Abidi, thefather of India's disability rights movement, is no more.

Mr Abidi is widely credited with thedrafting and passage of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (RPWD) Act 2016. He was the director of the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) in India.

Mr Abidi was also the chairperson of Disabled People's International (India) - DPII. This is a global body with special consultative status to the United Nations.

Mr Abidi was born in Aligarh in 1965. He had congenital spina bifida, which is a developmental disorder. He traveled tirelessly across the world on a wheelchair, advocating the rights of disabled people.

He set up the disability wing of the Rajiv Gandhi Foundation in India, after being invited to do so by Sonia Gandhi. In 1995, he led a protest before Parliament, which pushed Parliament into passing the Persons with Disabilities Act that same year.

His letter to the Chief Justice of India in 2004 on making polling booths accessible to persons with disabilities was converted into a writ petition. The Supreme Court of India then passed directions to make the voting process accessible.

Since the news of his demise, social media has been flooded with reactions of grief.

Sorry to hear that Mr Javed Abidi is no more. He gave hope to many Persons with Disabilities, fought for their rights and made India a more equal opportunity place. His demise has created a vacuum that cannot be filled - Nipun Malhotra, Founder- Nipman Foundation

**27. Nutrition can help prevent age-related blindness**

There has been arapid rise in cases of blindness in the world in recent years.

Most of these cases are the result of age-related blindness known as macular degeneration (AMD).

AMD has evolved as the leading cause of permanent vision loss in the world.

Here are some foods that can prevent AMD.

* Include fresh fruits and vegetables in everyday nutrition.
* Eat more pulses as they have a high content of sulphur-containing amino acids, which is good for the eyes.
* Your food should be rich in Omega-3 fatty acids. This is found in olive oil, coconut oil, and ghee.
* Take plenty of Vitamin A. This is found in fish, meat, milk and eggs.

# 28. Be considerate towards people with hearing loss

When people are not able to hear the sounds around them, it indicates loss of hearing.

Loss of hearing can occur at any age and to anyone.

Not being able to hear clearly can affect the day-to-day life of a person to a large extent.

Interacting with others, listening to their favorite music or TV shows, can become challenging due to loss of hearing.

As per World Health Organization (WHO), 360 million people have hearing loss. Over one billion young people are at risk of hearing loss due to exposure to loud sounds.

People with hearing loss can be helped by those who can hear clearly by keeping a few things in mind.

1. Do not shout or talk too loudly if a hard of hearing person does not understand you.
2. Do not stop talking to a person with hearing loss just because you have to make an extra effort to communicate with them.
3. People with hearing loss may feel isolated in groups as they find it difficult to be a part of the conversation going on. Help them feel comfortable.
4. Do not treat them as a joke or make fun of people who are hard of hearing.
5. Family and friends can be extra supportive and caring for people with hearing loss.

Being a little considerate goes a long way in helping a person with hearing loss be a part of the social circle.

# 29. Former blind chess champion, Dr Charudatta Jadhav, creates internet radio for blind people

Dr Charudatta Jadhav, the well known blind chess champion, has started Radio Chess. This is a new internet radio that talks about chess for the blind.

Dr. Jadhav is the first Indian blind chess player to be awarded aninternational rating in the game of chess. He is also the head of Tata Consultancy Services' Accessibility Centre of Excellence. He established the All India Chess Federation for the Blind (AICFB) in 1997.

Currently, Dr. Jadhav does not take part in any chess competitions. Instead, he is committed to teaching chess to people who are blind and have low vision.

Dr. Jadhav says that the best way to reach a message to people who are blind and have low vision is through the ears. That is why he chose radio as a medium to educate blind users about chess.

Dr Jadhav says there are few chess coaches in India trained in blind chess. Attending coaching camps takes a lot of time and effort as well. That is where Radio Chess comes to the rescue.

Radio Chess emphasizes on lectures and exercises that will be given to blind and low vision chess enthusiasts.

The Radio Chess app can be downloaded from Play Store.

# 30. With a new technology called SDF, blind readers can now read PDF on an iPad

Francis Quek, a professor in the United States has developed atechnology for talking books. The technology is called STAAR Description Format (SDF). It allows people who are blind and with low vision to access more literature.

SDF converts any portable document format (PDF) to a version the blind can read on an iPad. Blind and low vision users can scan the text with their fingers to hear the words. They can control the pace of their reading, keep their place on the page, and refer back to text. SDF also allows them to highlight important information and take notes. The experience is like the experience enjoyed by those who are sighted.

The blind have to maintain every single piece of information in short-term memory when they are listening to an audiobook. Audiobooks for the blind do not offer much flexibility either. The burden of memory on a blind and low vision person when it comes to learning is quite huge.

The SDF technology has software and a user interface. The blind can download this and read any PDF on an iPad. The software turns every word into audio. It formats the document, while a plastic overlay gives a tactile landmark grid on the iPad screen. This allows blind and low vision readers to keep their place spatially on the page.

With the overlay on the iPad screen, blind and low vision readers scan the text from left to right with their fingers. As they glide over the words, the system announces the words. The sound of crinkling paper alerts readers when they move outside the boundary of the sentence they are reading. A clicking noise alerts them when they move too quickly. There is 'ding' sound that lets them know when they reach the end of a line.

Dr Quek is refining SDF technology so that blind and low vision readers can highlight text and make notes.

# 31. Disabled swimmer Mohammed Shaikh chosen for global sports program

Disabled swimming champion Mohammad Shams Aalam Shaikh has been selected for a Global Sports Mentoring Program calledSports for Community. This is an initiative created by the United States government. He will leave later this month.

31-year-old Shaikh, who is from Madhubani, is the only person from Bihar to be chosen for this program. The program will be held from 25 March to 29 April. It is in partnership with the University of Tennessee.

Eighteen emerging leaders from across the world have been selected by the U.S government for the month-long mentorship program. Shaikh will be mentored by international experts on ideas that will help to create sports-related opportunities for disabled people.

All transport and accommodation expenses will be provided by the United States government.

Shaikh was a karate black-belt holder. He became paraplegic after a spinal cord injury in 2010. He refused to feel discouraged and went on to become a para-swimmer. He is hoping to win a gold medal in the 2018 Asian Para Games in Indonesia. This year, on Republic Day, he was honoured by **Bihar Governor Satya Pal Malik**.

People from 216 countries had applied for the Global Mentorship Program. He said that the training would give him the knowledge needed to promote inclusive sport in rural areas.

**32. 5th March, 2018 – the flashback to how the dialogue on Web Accessibility started in India with none other than Javed Abidi at the forefront of it!**

In 2007, after lots of skepticism about all I had heard about “The Disability Rights Activist”, “The angry man who was fighting for disability rights,” “The dharna Activist”, “Mr. Javed Abidi”, “The Executive Director of NCPEDP”, I approached Javed with a problem that I thought was looming in the future of people with disabilities in India!

Javed has mentioned this story multiple times in his talks. But now it’s time to hear my side of the story!

He basically heard me out and then said, “Who are you? I haven’t heard of a Shilpi Kapoor,” “what is this [BarrierBreak](http://barrierbreak.com/)” and “why would [NCPEDP](http://www.ncpedp.org/)work with you.”

This was the stern Javed Abidi, the one who could just look at you and you could just freeze! I remember literally trembling and sitting at the edge of my chair.

My answer was simple, since it affects people with disabilities! He actually told me, I was nuts since no one else had told him there was a problem in technology access for disabled people. He anyway said, call me tomorrow at 5 pm, and I will think about it!

That day started a relationship of a type I had never imagined possible. A friend, a mentor, a protective wall in front of me, a person who stood for web accessibilitymore than any other person in India. But above all, “a friend”.

Our friendship was one where we could be advisors or teachers to each other.

I would get a call from Javed saying “Shilpi, come to Delhi and teach me all this technology words. I need to be able talk of the challenges of the disabled, you talk all the techy stuff.”

We complemented each other! His passion about disability and making change and mine about forcing conversations related to technology and inclusion.

I haven’t been able to post about his passing away. I just couldn’t get myself to say it.

This morning at 6:00 am, I took a flight to Delhi, to see him for the last time. I didn’t know where to stay, what to do in the evening, since we had a pact to meet every evening that I was in Delhi. I’m on the way back to Mumbai and decided not to stay back in Delhi! I couldn’t handle the void.

We fought, we laughed, we shared, we smiled, we gossiped and above all, weworked towards change.

Javed Abidi brought more people together than any other disability rights activist, I have known. Everyone is sitting in their corners asking for things specific to their disability! He insisted on bringing people together. Whether it was the Disability Rights Group (DRG), National Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (NCRPD) or the National Convention of Youth with Disabilities (NCYD).

I hope each of you notice that none of these ideas put people in buckets but always focused on all disabled groups!

Over the years, we worked on getting [Guideline for Indian Government Websites (GIGW)](http://guidelines.gov.in/)to include Accessibility and in particular Web Content Accessibility Guideline (W3C), the [National Policy on Electronic Universal Accessibility](https://www.dnis.org/National-Policy-on-Universal-Electronics.pdf). So many different initiatives on Roundtables on Smart Cities & Accessible Technology, promoting web accessibility in RPWD Act, public procurement, Accessible TV guidelines, document accessibility, mobile accessibility.

The road has been tough. There was so much to yet get done, since we knew that the problem in India has always been implementation.

Javed always said Shilpi, get the correct language in the law or policy. Someone, somewhere, at sometime will be able to use it to push for web accessibility implementation. Getting it in the letter will give us something to work towards.

So many of us have argued with him, we may not have agreed with all his idea, but I hope we can learn from him about bringing the disabled people of India together.

I hope we can take his legacy ahead! I hope we can make him proud of an Inclusive & accessible India!

Till we meet again Javed! I will miss your crazy 4 am emails and calls to discuss idea on digital accessibility!

# 33. Film about a deaf child wins Oscar, director gives acceptance speech in sign language

The Silent Child, a film about a deaf child, has won the Oscar for live-action short film.

The writer, Rachel Shenton, gave heracceptance speech in sign language. The film director, Chris Overton, joined Shenton onstage. Shenton said that she had promised the lead actress, Maisie Sly, that she would give her acceptance speech in sign.

Six-year-old Maisie plays the lead role in the film.

In her speech, Shenton highlighted the communication barriers that deaf and hard of hearing children face.

Our movie is about a deaf child being born into a world of silence. It’s not exaggerated or sensationalized for the movie. This is happening. Millions of children all over the world live in silence and face communication barriers and particularly access to education - Rachel Shenton, Writer, The Silent Child

Shenton called deafness a silent disability. It is not visible or life threatening. She thanked the jury for allowing them to put the film before a mainstream audience.

# 34. South African Sign Language is now an official language in the country's education system

The South African Sign Language (SASL) has been recognized as ahome language in the country's education system by the government.

Disability rights activists are happy with the decision. They say that this means deaf learners in South Africa will no longer feel like foreigners in their own land. They can now exercise their rights to be taught and assessed in their own language.

Activists say that by recognizing SASL as a home language, deaf culture is now a fundamental part of South African culture.

Government authorities say that this is a sign that the system has fully embraced deaf learners. It is also a statement that their language is valued and respected.

# 35. Survey done in Andhra Pradesh district to identify children with disabilities

Early identification of disabilities is important for effective care. There is growing awareness about this in India. Recently, a survey was conducted in Srikakulam in the state of Andhra Pradesh to identify children with physical and mental disabilities.

The aim is to identify these children and help them under various government schemes.

Staff members of the Rajiv Vidya Mission (RVM) conducted this survey in Srikakulam. Children between 6 to 18 years were part of the survey. 38 divisions of the district were surveyed by 300 staff members.

The survey found out that there are approximately 7,844 children with physical and mental disabilities across the district. Most of these children are being educated inside their homes. Based on the survey, a report will be prepared and sent to the government by RVM officials.

The **District Coordinator for Inclusive Education A. Sanjivi Rao** said that the survey was done to understand if these children were getting government benefits. Based on this, a decision will be taken to increase the benefits provided to these children.

# 36. Delhi High Court orders disability audit in Delhi jails

The Delhi High Court has given the order for a disability audit to be conducted in jails in New Delhi.

This is important as a number of prisoners with disabilities live in jails.

The court was hearing a plea on the rise in the deaths of prisoners at Tihar Jail. There were also complaints that prisoners were being tortured.

The High Court has ordered the Director General of Prisons to organise training sessions for staff members at these prisons.

The aim of this training is to sensitize officials to the needs of disabled prisoners.

It was found that the authorities could not present any data about the facilities available in jails for disabled prisoners.

The jails have to be made disabled-friendly, as per the High Court's orders. A senior officer has to be nominated to look into the issue.

This officer will help out in doing a disability audit in all the jails in New Delhi. The audit is to be undertaken by disability rights activist, Nipun Malhotra.

# 37. Lack of relevant data acts as barrier to holding disabled-friendly elections in Bengaluru City

The theme spelt out by the Election Commission of India for the elections to the Karnataka assembly is Inclusive, Accessible and Ethical. Accordingly, the state election machinery is preparing to make the polling process disabled-friendly.

Karnataka's **Chief Electoral Officer Sanjiv Kumar** has ordered that committees be formed at the state, district, taluk and village levels to ensure that elections are accessible to disabled people.

To begin with, the CEO has asked district-level officers to prepare a database of disabled people to make sure they are enrolled as voters.

Putting this data together is a major challenge in Bengaluru city, which is believed to have the highest number of disabled people. While other districts have updated their data relating to disabled people regularly, Bengaluru Urban district still depends on the 2011 census data.

Officials have started updating the data only recently. They are unable to do it quickly as there are not enough people to do so. They are trying to rework the database based on the number of disability certificates issued, pension beneficiaries, and by taking help of NGOs.

There are plans to organize special camps for disabled people to enroll in the electoral rolls. Arrangements will be made for disabled people in every polling booth.

Disability rights groups say that the distance between the polling booth and the house of a disabled voter should be as little as possible. They want ramps and railings, speech and hearing signages as well. They are also asking for transport arrangements to be made for people with higher degrees of disability. This will make it easier for them to travel on polling day.

# 38. New York is America's first city to offer ASL Direct to people who are deaf & hard of hearing

The New York City administration has announced the launch of ASL Direct.

ASL Direct refers to video technology that allows people who are deaf and hard of hearing to connect via webcam to an information specialist fluent in American Sign Language (ASL).

This makes New York City America's first city to offer this service.

ASL Direct will enable New York City residents, who mainly use ASL, to obtain city services faster and more efficiently. They can connect from any Android, Mac, iOS, or Windows device, via a link on the website of the Mayor’s Office for People with Disabilities (MOPD).

The MOPD has worked with the Department of Information Technology and Telecommunications to implement this video technology.

New York City Mayor **Bill de Blasio** said that this was one step towards making the city, the fairest city, in the United States.

Becoming the fairest big city in America means ensuring equitable access to City services for all New Yorkers, including our Deaf and Hard of Hearing neighbors. Deaf and Hard of Hearing New Yorkers now have a one-stop shop for information, whether it’s how to find affordable housing, enroll in Pre-K, or where to get a flu shot. - Bill de Blasio, Mayor of New York

The video technology has been developed in close partnership with the deaf and hard of hearing community.

There are over two lakh people who are deaf and hard of hearing in New York City. Most of them communicate through ASL.

# 39. Kolkata study highlights the need of disabled women for intimacy & relationships

India's first thematic paper, exploring the need for intimacy among women with psychosocial disabilities, has been launched in Kolkata's Jadavpur University.

Called Sexual Rights of Woman with Psychosocial Disabilities, the paper dismisses the notion that people with disabilities do not desire access to pleasure. It says that disabled women have sexual needs as well.

Dr Ketki Ranade of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) in Mumbai, and mental health rights organization Anjali have written the paper. The paper was written after a six-month research project in Kolkata.

Sixteen women, from government-run mental homes and those living with their families, were interviewed for the study. All the women spoke about their physical longing for their husbands. They had all been abandoned by their husbands.

Experts hope the paper will help clear misconceptions regarding sexuality and mental illness. Most families have no understanding about this aspect. The study also highlights the need to create safe spaces for people living with mental illnesses. This will help them express their desire, need for relationships, and intimacy.

# 40. Deaf & speech impaired student drowns in swimming pool in Bhopal

In a tragic incident, a deaf and speech impaired student of class 7, drowned in a swimming pool in Bhopal.

The child, Sohanlal Chadar, belongs to Tikamgarh district in Madhya Pradesh. He was studying at a government school for hearing and speech impaired children at Idgah Hills.

The Bhopal District Collector Sudam Khade has suspended two officials from the government-run hostel in which Sohanlal was living. These are the hostel warden and the watchman.

The Collector said that if the two officials had kept an eye on Sohanlal, he would not have left the hostel campus.

The Collector has also sent a letter to the Bhopal Municipal Commissioner to take action against officials at the swimming pool.

The pool had been abandoned for the last six years. It still had water in it. Sohanlal managed to cross a wall that was 10 to 12 feet high to get inside the pool. He was found inside the water.

# 41. New therapy centre opened at Patiala School for Deaf & Blind

A newoccupational therapy centrehas been opened at the Patiala School for Deaf and Blind. The center was opened by the local MPDharmvira Gandhi. The therapy centre was donated by the MP under the Members of Parliament Local Area Development (MPLAD) scheme.

The school's efforts to help the children here was much praised by the MP. Gandhi also liked the layout of the building.

Pawan Kumar Bansal, secretary of the Society for Welfare of Handicapped, said that children with disabilities needs a lot of care and attention. Many of them are unable to do things on their own at first. This is where a therapy centre comes to the rescue. They can learn to move their muscles better. This will help them do things independently.

Officials of the Society for Welfare of Handicapped in Patiala said that the therapy centre is mainly aimed for children who have multiple disabilities.

# 42. Dance drama in Indian Sign Language captures the imagination of Pune audiences

A dance drama show called I story, Mi Gosht, Mai Kahani was presented through Kathak at a performance in Pune.

What made this performance by the dance troupeSutradharunique, was that the dance drama was accessible to everyone - the deaf and hard of hearing, as well as the hearing audience.

There were two sign language interpreters who did a live Indian Sign Language interpretation of the dance drama. This led to an overwhelming response from everyone in the audience.

The emotions were beautifully portrayed by the dancers. The performance started off with the artistes doing Kathak on how a story is formed. It also portrayed the emotions a writer experiences in the process of creating a story.

The dancers also showcased the way a story can take various forms of narration, poetry, dance and so on.

# 43. Former cricketer Virender Sehwag tells government to do more for Para athletes

Indians are huge fans of sports, especially cricket. But how often do we support Para athletes? Former cricketerVirender Sehwag has highlighted this issue.

Sehwag recently tweeted about the need to support Para badminton player Sanjeev Kumar. He said the government should assist Para athletes, who are struggling for financial aid.

Sanjeev Kumar has won medals at the World Paralympic Games and ranksseventh in the world. But it has been a struggle for him at every step. Lack of funds has been a big barrier to trying for the next level. The government has not supported him at all.

Kumar was even struggling to raise funds to buy a wheelchair so that he could take part in the 2020 Tokyo Paralympics. This is when Sehwag came to the rescue.

Gaurav Khanna, Director and Chief Coach at the Para-Badminton Association of India, says the government does not show any interest in supporting Para athletes. A few organizations are helping, like Go Sports Foundation, ONGC, Yonex, and Victor. They buy the Para athletes’ wheelchairs and other essential equipment.

Para athletes, coaches, and organizers want the government to offer greater support so they can bring more medals and glory to India.

**44. Khelo India for disabled sportspersons to be held in Nagaland**

Special Olympics Nagaland (SON) is organizing Khelo India for people with disabilities in five categories.

These areAthletics, Football, Bocce, Badminton, and Unified Sports. This event will be held in various districts of Nagaland from 13 March.

This is the schedule according to a press release from SON:

* 13 & 14 March - Mokokchung
* 13 & 14 March - Mon
* 13 & 14 March - Wokha
* 15 & 16 March - Peren
* 19 & 20 March - Dimapur

People with disabilities travelling from villages to take part will have to show original bus or taxi tickets for the journey both ways to be reimbursed.

This District Games will be followed by State Games in Dimapur in the third week of March. The selected para athletes will then represent Nagaland at the National Games in Gujarat in May 2018.

Khelo India is one of the most cherished projects of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The aim is to identify young sports talents. It also aims to promote sports at the grassroots level.

Khelo India is held under the Union Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports. Its aim is to revive the sports culture in India.

Disabled sportspersons from Nagaland have won 126 medals at international and national competitions. But there are not enough NGOs to support them.

# 45. Eyegaze Edge, the eye-tracking technology, helps disabled people communicate with eyes

Eyegaze Edge is a device that uses a computer monitor, a specialized camera, and software that can use the eyes to give commands.

Many people are calling it amedical miracle.

By looking at control keys or cells displayed on a screen, a person with a disability can generate speech or type a message. A specialized video camera watches the eye movements and does all the work.

Eyegaze enables a disabled person to write emails, check social media, stream movies, and music, with little effort. It is especially useful for people with locked-in syndrome. This is a condition where a person can hear and see, but cannot speak or move.

Eyegaze is helping people with Multiple Sclerosis and cerebral palsy.

# 46. Protest in Kerala city over lack of scholarships for disabled children

Leaders of theBharatiya Rashtriya Congress Seva (BRCS) staged a daylong hunger strike in Kozhikode in Kerala. They were drawing attention to the lack of scholarships for children with disabilities.

The protestors said that the Kerala government has not sponsored any scholarships for children with disabilities in the state. The Sarva Siksha Abhiyan does not provide learning aides to disabled children anymore. This affects children who want to study and become independent. It also affects disabled children from poor families.

The protestors said that the condition of disabled children is ignored, as they do not voice their problems. They also alleged that Kerala has the reputation of being a disabled-friendly state, but this is not the reality.

The BRCS also demanded that rescue homes for children with disabilities be set up by the Kerala government.

# 47. Gujarat NGOs for blind people ensure scribes are prepared for board exams

NGOs in Gujarat are making sure that there is no confusion over exam writers or scribes for the board exams this year.

Every precaution is being taken to ensure that blind students are able to take their exams well. There have been instances when exam writers or scribes promise to come, but back out on the day of the exam. This has led to many blind students missing out on taking their exams. In some cases, some blind students have even lost a year.

The Blind People's Association (BPA) is one of Gujarat’s oldest organizations. It has 46 students under its wing who are taking the board exams this year. The NGO is in constant touch with the scribes.

Manubhai Chaudhary, Principal of BPA School, has said that his organization has taken the required permissions from parents and schools regarding the exam writers. They are also taking a letter of commitment from the exam writer that he or she will appear for the exam of the blind student without fail

# 48. Border Security Force officials organize event for disabled children

The Border Security Force (BSF) in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan, organized an event for 53 children with disabilities. BSF officers and*jawans*, led by the commandant, Vipin Panti, organized a session for the kids. They spoke about how disability must never act as a block to achieving things in life.

The officers talked about artistes, writers, and sportspersons with disabilities, who had achieved great things. People like Stephen Hawking, Helen Keller, Sudha Chandran, Arunima Sinha, and Rajendra Singh Rahelu were given as examples.

At the session, the many schemes started by the central government for disabled people was also discussed. These included the Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan program started by **Prime Minister Narendra Modi** in 2015. Under this program, public buildings in India are to be made disabled-friendly.

The BSF also distributed wheelchairs, walking sticks, hearing aids, and other assistive devices to children with disabilities. They motivated them to look past the barriers and achieve great things.

**49. Rejected by companies, blind engineer from Jaipur starts his own company**

Prateek Aggarwal is asoftware engineer, who is blind.

He has all the right qualifications, but was not able to secure a job. He faced constant rejections.

Prateek was a brilliant student, who topped all his courses. Yet, none of that mattered when he started looking for a job. The fact that he was 100% blind was all that companies noticed.

He faced rejection in job interviews, time and again.

The rejections did not break his spirit. In fact, Prateek decided to start his own company.

His strong will led to the creation of Daedal Technovations. The company provides solutions to clients in more than 50 countries. It employs people on-site and remotely.

Prateek now provides jobs to others as an entrepreneur

He still remembers the several job opportunities he lost out on, just because of his disability. His sharp mind helped him clear written tests and do well at group discussions.

However, when it came to personal interviews with the Human Resources Department, he would always hear a big NO.

He believes that lack of awareness in employers, not the disability, is the main factor that acts as a barrier to employing a disabled person.

**50. New home for people with mental disabilities to be set up in Delhi**

A new home for people with mental disabilities may soon be set up in Narela in New Delhi. The idea of a new home has been under discussion for the last five years.

The new home for people with mental disabilities will ease some of the pressure off of the current home, Asha Kiran. Asha Kiran has been under the scanner for many problems, like overcrowding, deaths, and reports of human rights violations.

The new home for people with mental disabilities will be set up at a proposed cost of Rs 350 crore. It will be able to house around 600 people. The proposal will soon be sent to **Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal**, for approval. After this, the Delhi Cabinet will take it up.

The idea of setting up a new home first came up in 2013 when Sheila Dikshit was the Delhi Chief Minister.

The new home will be bigger. It will also be an integrated complex, where training will be given to volunteers. Inmates will be taught vocational skills. There will be medical facilities provided, including physiotherapy.

Eleven people had died at the Asha Kiran home in just two months in 2009. This drew attention to the poor conditions there. About 970 people stay at Asha Kiran. The capacity is 510.

**51. Solo bike rider from Bihar on a journey to empower blind people**

Saif Ahmad Khan, a biker from Patna, is currently on amission to spread awareness aboutpeople who are blind.

Saif has started a solo journey on his bikeacross India.

He started from Delhi on 21 January 2018 and has covered 2,300 km so far. He has passed through Agra, Lucknow, and Bihar. He wants to cover more cities.

The aim of this one-man journey is to sensitize people about vision disabilities. His riding campaign ‘Ride for Netraheen’, literally means to ‘ride for the blind’.

Saif has also founded a NGO called the ‘Save The Quest’. The NGO works to provide quality education to disabled and underprivileged children in Delhi and Bihar.

Saif was inspired to take up the cause of blind people when he saw the challenges that they faced.

He started the social work by creating a scribe bank. Saif found that it was a huge hurdle for blind students to get a writer for exams.

Saif said he was inspired to start the bike campaign as Bihar has a huge number of disabled people, who need to be empowered.

He is passionate about bike riding, as well as and working to empower people who are blind.

The campaign ‘Ride for Netraheen’ combines both. He is hopeful of making a change in society.

**52. Blind man wins national stand-up comedy championship in Japan**

Yutaro Hamada is the winner of Japan’s most popularnational stand-up comedy championship. What has really impressed people is that Hamada is blind.

28-year-old Hamada had to get through many rounds to make it to the finals of the comedy championship. He walked away with a cash prize of over Rs 31 lakh.

The comedy show is called 16th R-1 Grand Prix. It was held to choose thefunniest solo performer of Japan.

Hamada’s jokes were based on his own experiences in life as a blind person. The jokes made him an instant winner.

The competition was held on a huge scale. Nearly 4,000 people took part in the latest tournament, which is a record.

Hamada is a professional comedian. He works with Yoshimoto Kogyo, which is an entertainment company.

**53. Odisha government makes local guardianship a must for disabled people**

The government of Odisha has directed all district collectors to make provisions to ensure that disabled people have local guardians. This includes people with disabilities like autism, cerebral palsy, and many others.

This new step is taken under the local guardianship provisions of the National Trust Act 1999. Local-level committees that can give legal support to disabled people are also to be formed.

Under the Act, the district collector will be the chairperson of the local-level committee. The committee will also include a registered NGO, a disabled person, and other members.

Most disabled people are unaware of the Act. So, they do not apply for the benefits. They do not get legal support as well.

The National Trust Act 1999 has also launched a web portal,www.thenationaltrust.gov.in, for processing applications for local guardianships among people with disabilities.

**54. Say hello to Bat Travels, the agency that wants to make travel fun for blind people!**

Most tours and travels in India are not geared towards people who are blind. There are also barriers like stigma that blind people face during travels.

Enter Bat Travels, a Mumbai-based tourism company that is trying to change the picture.

Bat Travels is the brainchild of two former advertising professionals and friends, Ritu Sinha and Divya Saxena. Launched in November 2017, the company comes up with tours that are inclusive. They are open for both blind and sighted travelers. Their programs are designed in such a way that they engage all the senses, not just sight.

So far, Bat Travels has organized four trips, including to places like Varanasi and Kamshet. The company founders say that its incredible to see how people bond during these trips.

Many people part exchanging phone numbers. They still keep in touch and look forward to the next trip.

The idea of Bat Travels came to Divya and Ritu during a trip to Europe trip in 2017. They came back to India and found that most trips were designed for sightseeing. They decided to focus on tours that would cater to all the senses, and not just sight.

**55. Pakistan agrees to release Indian prisoners with disabilities & the elderly**

The government of Pakistan has agreed to the proposal made by India, regarding the release of prisoners.

Pakistan has agreed to release Indianwomen, disabled people, and the elderly above 70 years, who are currently in Pakistani jails.

India will do the same for Pakistani prisoners lodged in Indian jails.

In October 2017, the External Affairs Ministry of India had suggested to the High Commissioner of Pakistan, that both countries should take this step on a humanitarian basis.

The two countries will take the necessary action for the release of prisoners who fall into the categories of the elderly, women, children or minors, and people with intellectual disabilities.

India had also proposed that doctors should be made available to examine thedisabled prisoners locked up in both countries.

Pakistan has accepted the proposal.

As per recent reports, there 457 Indian prisoners in Pakistani jails. There are 344 Pakistani prisoners locked up in Indian jails.

**56. Tourism Ministry announces many steps to make holiday destinations accessible for disabled people**

The Ministry of Tourism has announced the following steps to make tourist destinations friendlier for people with disabilities.

* Swadesh Darshan or PRASHAD (National Mission on Pilgrimage Rejuvenation and Spiritual, Heritage Augmentation Drive) - All state governments and union territories will have to give an undertaking that a barrier-free environment for disabled tourists has been included in the design of built up areas of the project. The agency executing the project will have to put in place required facilities for barrier-free access for people with physical disabilities.
* A National Tourism Award for Best Maintained and Disabled-Friendly Monument will be given to encourage agencies responsible for maintaining monuments to create an accessible, barrier-free environment.
* There are guidelines issued for classifying hotels under two provisions. One, a specially designed room with accessible bathroom and furniture. Two, accessible washrooms and ramps with anti-slip floors to allow wheelchair access to public areas, and at least one restaurant.

The Tourism Ministry had come up with a report on the problems faced by disabled tourists. Some of them were:

* Lack of accessible taxis and local transport facilities.
* Lack of proper information and signages at necessary point and intersection.
* Lack of affordable and accessible accommodation.
* Lack of accessible public conveniences at destination.

# 57. This NGO in Kerala is helping disabled children realize their potential

Dream of Us is an NGO based in Kozhikode in Kerala. The NGO works specifically for the welfare of children with disabilities.

The NGO aims to help disabled children find aplace for themselves in mainstream society.

One of the ways it does this is by showcasing their talents in art.

In December 2017, 22 artists from this NGO displayed their work at a seven-day exhibition in the city. All the paintings were sold out. The exhibition was a big success.

Dream of Us also provides training in communication to children who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Another major aspect of their work is educating parents' about the needs of disabled children.

Next on the agenda is a nature camp for hearing and speech impaired children at the end of March.

The camp will be held at Guruvayurappan College in Kozhikode.

The camp aims to promote inclusion as well as awareness about the environment among the children.

# 58. Chennai designer Shalini Visakan designs clothes for people with disabilities

Shalini Visakan is the new talk of the town in Chennai. Her clothing lineSuvastra Designs caters only to people with disabilities. What sets this fashion designer apart from the rest is that she plans to only design adaptive clothing.

A graduate of the prestigious National Institute of Fashion Technology, Visakan started off by designing belts and other products for her husband, Visakan.

Visakan is a businessman, who uses a wheelchair. Her next client was an aunt, also awheelchair user. For her, Shalini designed a sari with an attached blouse. It is fashioned such that it does not need a petticoat.

Shalini soon realized that her designs were very useful to people with disabilities. She decided to go one step further and come up with her line, Suvastra,exclusively for disabled people.

She soon plans to launch a store that sells only adaptive clothing. Shalini plans to keep the designs functional and affordable. The prices will start from Rs 1,000.

Shalini says she will only charge for the cloth material and stitching. Her aim is toencourage more designers to come up with a range of adaptive clothing.

She may well set a new trend in the Indian fashion scene!

# 59. Rajasthan High Court pulls up state government for delaying aid to school for deaf kids

The Rajasthan High Court has issued notices to the state and district governments asking why funds have not been released to a school for deaf students.

The school, which is called Gandhi Deaf and Dumb Residential Hostel, has not received its grant for the last eight months.

The hostel run by the school has 115 students. This is a part of the Gandhi Deaf Senior Secondary School. The school is run by the NGO Jodhpur Badhir Kalyan Samiti in the city of Jodhpur since 1982.

The state government sanctions Rs 25 lakh for the school every year. This is to provide to students there. But for the last eight months, no money has been released.

School authorities have been collecting money from other social institutions in order to pay for the facilities.

The president of the Jodhpur Badhir Kalyan Samiti said that the government had inspected the hostel premises a few months ago. They found some faults after the inspection. Since then, the grant had stopped. The hostel staff has not received salaries for the last four months.

**60. First woman booked under disabilities law**

MUMBAI: A woman travelling illegally in a compartment reserved for the disabled was booked under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act by the GRP on Thursday.

This is the first time that a woman has been booked under this stringent Act. An activist, Fatima D’Souza, pressed charges and also shot a clip of her argument with the woman. “I had boarded the 10.58am Churchgate-bound local from [Nalasopara](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Nalasopara) station on Thursday. An able-bodied woman boarded the compartment at [Dahisar](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Dahisar). I asked her if she knew that the compartment was reserved for the disabled. She said she was aware and had got in as there was no space in the ladies coach. She also started arguing with me,” said D’Souza.

**61. Quota list for schools late after court order, says DoE**

NEW DELHI: The draw of lots for [EWS](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/EWS) admission at private schools was delayed a second time on Thursday after the directorate of education claimed it received a [court order](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/court-order) recently. DoE officials say it would now happen on March 15.
“In the meantime, my team is also sending out messages to the parents about the delay,” said director of education [Saumya Gupta](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Saumya-Gupta).

She said there were two orders that were posted by Delhi high court on the same day, one of which was received recently. “We would like to be on the right side of the law before making any further move,” Gupta told TOI.

The said order passed on February 21 tells DoE to include unfilled EWS seats from the previous year and fill them up with pending applications. DoE has also been asked why several private schools were not offering admission under the 5% disability [quota](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/quota) and the number of unfilled seats in that category. DoE is to submit a compliance report by March 14.

Another order passed on the same day also pointed out several “limitations” on the admission web portal. The division bench of justices S Ravindra Bhat and A K Chawla observed on February 21 that there are issues on the portal pertaining to date of birth, area code etc. It observed that there was an age limit that was excluding students, and changes must be made to “ensure that the widest choice is given to the applicants”.

The bench also ordered that the portal be updated on a weekly basis and a compliance report submitted. DoE officials said this was being factored in.

But parents are anxious. “The parents got to know on Wednesday through the official circular that it has been delayed by a day, but they got anxious when no result was declared on Thursday either. Word about the postponement came only after 3pm,” said Dharamveer, an NGO worker who helps to fill up forms.

Message sent to parents said the draw of lots would take place on March 15 and results would be communicated via SMS on March 16.

**62. Bengaluru students develop prizewinning glove for deaf, speech impaired people to communicate**

Fiveengineering students from Bengaluru have won an award for developing a device that allows people who are deaf and speech impaired to communicate with others.

The award-winning students are from MVJ College of Engineering. They walked away with the first prize of Rs one lakh for the device. The device is a hand glove embedded with sensors that allows a deaf and speech impaired person to communicate with others.

The students are Devanshu Jha, Chiragdeep Singh Malhotra, Muhammad Hameem Safwat Hussain, Abhishek Nanda and Moinudeen. They say they got the idea while brainstorming for the final year project.

They had seen some of their deaf and speech impaired friends struggle to communicate in sign language with people who do not know the language. They decided to make a device that would allow them to communicate with others.

The glove is fitted with sensors, which pick up the signs. The data is collected from all the sensors in each finger to translate the sign. The output is shown through anLCD screen. The person wearing the glove communicates in sign language.

# 63. United Airlines will sensitize staff towards travelers with intellectual disabilities

United Airlines, a major airline in the United States, is taking measures to improve the travel experience for people with intellectual disabilities. This is one of the many steps planned to improve inclusion.

United Airlines has said that it will train all its workers to understand the needs of disabled people better.

The training has been developed with Special Olympics. It aims to make travelling apositive experience.

Over 60,000 of the airline’s frontline employees will complete the new training by the end of 2018.

Apart from this, United Airlines is also looking at ways to make people with intellectual disabilities a part of its attempts to create an inclusive workforce.

# 64. Fittle, the 3D Braille puzzle, is helping blind children read Braille quickly

Fittle is the world’s first 3D printed braille puzzle, which isopen source. It is helping children, who are blind or have low vision, in India learn toread braillequickly and efficiently.

India has a population of 22 million people who are visually impaired. Many of them are unable to find jobs. The ability to read braille gives them a chance to become independent.

By learning how to read Braille, a blind person's chances of studying further and finding a good job increase by as much as three times.

The problem is that learning Braille is expensive. A digital braille reading device can cost over Rs 60,000. This means that most blind people in developing countries have to manage with learning tools that are outdated and boring to use.

A project in India is trying to change this. It has devised a braille learning tool, called Fittle. Fittle is more accessible, cheaper, and interesting to use.

Fittle is the world’s first 3D printed braille puzzle

Fittles are available to download for free from the Fittle website. These files can then be printed for a cheap cost. They are hollow so the material usage is cheaper.

### How Fittle works

Every part of the Fittle puzzle has a different letter. Its connected parts spell out a complete word. What is creative and ingenious is that the overall puzzle takes the shape of what is being spelled.

Marks on the pieces help the learner figure out how to fit them together. Once they are in place, it’s possible to read and learn the word.

Fittle is the work of Indian designer Tania Jain. Jain has been partnering with LVPEI, a leading eye institute in India, Ravensburger, a German educational toy company, and Serviceplan, a global communication group.

The puzzles are being printed and distributed across India.

# 65. India needs awareness about diseases of retina

Eye doctors in India have stressed on the need for better eye care awareness.

Senior ophthalmologists called for awareness about diseases of the retina among the people.

According to the experts, age-related blindness and loss of vision due to diabetes can be managed. The vision loss cannot be completely corrected.

The number of Indians with age-related macular degeneration are expected to rise in the coming years as the population is aging.

With proper awareness the vision damage can be controlled and better eye health can be attained.

The experts have also said that there is a lack of awareness and information in people about diabetic retinopathy.

Diabetic retinopathy is a common eye ailment found in people with diabetes.

It happens when high blood sugar levels cause damage to blood vessels in the retina.

However, in most cases, patients do not realize the symptoms until it is too late. Only a trained retina specialist can detect the presence of the damage.

India has about 2 crore patients with diabetic retinopathy while, retina specialists are between 900 and 1100.

# 66. 2018 Paralympics Winter Games start in South Korea

The opening ceremony of the2018 Paralympics Winter Games took place in South Korea on Friday.

The tournament honors the talents and skills of disabled aportsoerskns. It was also honored by Google with a special Doodle on Friday.

Google Doodle celebrated the opening of the 2018 Paralympic Games in PyeongChang. The doodle shows athletes from each of the six sports in the competition.

The para athletes will showcase their skills in six sports: alpine skiing, biathlon, cross-country skiing, Para ice hockey, snowboarding and wheelchair curling.

This year’s competition is going to be the biggest winter Paralympics till date. The games this year will see more female athletes than ever before.

More than 560 athletes will take part in the Paralympics this year from 49 countries.

North Korea, Georgia and Tajikistan are the three countries that are participating for the first time in the Winter Paralympics 2018.

Indian para athletes have been taking part in every edition of the Summer Paralympics since 1984.

However, India has never participated in the Winter Paralympics Games.

The Paralympics will take place from 9 March till 18 March 2018.

# 67. How to make websites accessible for people with disabilities

Most services, products and information are now available on the Internet through websites.

The Internet can play an important role in empowering people with disabilities. However, if the websites are not accessible, they are of no use.

Here are some basic tips to make a website accessible.

1. Websites should use fonts and colors that can be easily seen by people with visual impairments. Darker words, outlines, and higher contrast on letters, is better for people with low vision.
2. Zoom option or screen magnification software can also make it possible to make the fonts bigger for users with low vision.
3. Voiceover features can tell website users about the content. It also makes navigating the website easier.
4. Head-tracking software can help move the pointer with head movements.
5. Options for dictation commands.

Technology is improving very fast, making the world more accessible for people with disabilities.

Website designers can play a major role in promoting inclusion by designing accessible websites.

# 68. Elderly blind man designs hybrid cane that helps to maintain balance

Many blind people use a white cane to move around. The cane helps them to detect obstacles in their path.

However, the white cane is not as effective when it comes to maintaining balance. This can be dangerous.

93-year-old Marty Osman, who is blind, faced this difficulty. He was advised to walk using two canes. One was to maintain balance, while the other was the white cane.

Osman was not happy using two canes, as he could not hold anything else in his hands.

Osman, who used to be an engineer in the United States Army, decided to create a cane to address the problem. He called it a Fall Preventer.

The Fall Preventer is a hybrid between a support cane and a white stick. The stick has a 360-degree stabilizing rubber tip, that helps the user maintain balance.

Osman is all set to sell the cane through Amazon as he wants to help other elderly people.

# 69. People with disabilities and activists unhappy with railway data

The past few days saw protests by people with disabilities to make railway stations accessible. After these widespread protests, Indian railways released data on the facilities that have been provided for people with disabilities. But activists and people with disabilities are no happy with the released data.

A plea was given to the railway authorities to provide ID cards for people with disabilities. But authorities have not replied to it yet.

According to an E-mail by railway spokesperson Sheyphali B. Saran, there are 709 stations that falls under 'A-1', 'A' & 'B' categories on Indian Railways. 644 stations have been provided with all (seven) short-term facilities and 624 stations have been provided with (two) long-term facilities.

In short-term facilities, stations will have ramps for people with disabilities. It will also have toilets on the ground floor, drinking water taps that can be used by people with disabilities and appropriate signages and a parking lot. Sheyphali says that 2,352 out of 7,349 have these facilities. Sheyphali also pointed out other facilities in the other categories.

Muralidharan, who is the general secretary of the National Platform for the Rights of the Disabled, said that if stations have these facilities, signages must be provided. Otherwise, people with disabilities will not know how to get to the facilities. He also added that Indian railways are not doing adequate things to make travel barrier-free for people with disabilities.

# 70. A device called Handsight may help improve the reading experience for blind people

People who are blind or have low vision can look forward to improving their reading experience.

A new technology calledHandsight has been developed by a group from the University of Maryland in the United States.

Handsight guides users as they move their hands along lines of text. The researchers initially wanted to make a glove so that people who are blind or have low vision could feel shapes and textures.

That later developed into a device that has been tested on more than 50 people.

The final goal is to enable access that one cannot get through touch to things like images and colors.

So for instance, a user can run his or her fingers across the text on a newspaper to get a sense of where there is a picture or captions.

A device that certainly holds out a lot of promise for everyone.

**71. Annual festival of Hans Raj College in Delhi University takes up inclusion as its theme**

One of Delhi University's oldest and most well known colleges, Hans Raj College, will hold its annual festival next week.

Called PAHAL, the festival is being organized by the Enabling Unit and Equal Opportunity Cell of Hans Raj College. PAHAL aims to promote an inclusive society, especially for students.

Newz Hook, a media partner of this festival, will bring you stories highlighting the various programs around the theme of inclusion.

Some of the events lined up are a DJ Evening, with a live performance by India'sfirst disabled abled DJ Varun Khullar. There is also an event called Inclusion Day-Out. This is open to anyone who has something to say at the Open Mic and Slam Poetry events.

There is a painting event, where people get to show off their artistic skills. The much looked forward to annual Talent Hunt is back as well. If anyone wants to register, this is the time to act.

One of the main highlights is an event called In Their Shoes. This is a series of activities that encourage participants to use all their senses. The idea is to build sensitization towards the needs of people with disabilities.

The festival is on 14 March and will be held at the lawn beside the Old Canteen of Hans Raj College. Events start at 12 PM.

The events are open to all people, regardless of sex, age, and disability.

# 72. Disability rights group in Andhra Pradesh seek 5% quota in local civic bodies

The Andhra Pradesh State Viravasantha Physically Handicapped Welfare Association (APSVPHWA)held a protest in Vijayawada to draw attention of the Andhra Pradesh government to their demands.

They are asking that the government give them the facilities that will enable them to lead regular lives.

The protesters say that they have been raising many demands for the last four years, but these have been ignored. This includes the implementation of a 2016 Supreme Court, according to which 5% reservation must be given to disabled people in local bodies.

Some of the other benefits they are demanding include, three-wheelers for people with disabilities, increased pensions, pensions for family members of people with disabilities, housing, shelters for disabled people in each district, and subsidy on loans.

At the protest a demand was also raised that an aid of Rs 5 lakh be given to disabled women, who are victims of rape.

# 73. A stand-up comedy show in Chennai to raise funds for disabled people

Chennai has a thriving stand-up comedy scene. There are any number of stand-up shows to keep residents here laughing.

Now for the first time, a stand-up comedy show will support the cause of disabled people. The Madras Round Table 1 (MRT 1) is organizing a fundraiser. Called Comedy Show – Chennai Laughs 2018, the event is in aid of The Spastics Society of Tamil Nadu (SPASTN).

The stand-up comedy show will be held at ITC Grand Chola Hotel on 17 March. The show features comedian Kanan Gill. Gill recently released his one-hour comedy special on Amazon Prime.

The comedy night will also feature other hosts like Jonathan Atherton, who is an actor and voice artiste, Karthik Iyer and Sundeep Rao. Rao is India's only partially blind male comic.

For over 36 years, SPASTN has been empowering children and adults with physical and mental disabilities.

The money raised from the fundraiser will go towards building a therapeutic activity hall at the institute’s headquarters in Taramani in Chennai.

SPASTN wants to use the space to hold seminars, workshops, and other activities that enrich the lives of children.

Donor passes for the show are available on Bookmyshow. A live band, cocktails, and dinner will follow the show.

# 74. Disabled boy in Kerala appeals to state government for help in continuing his education

For the last few months, Muhammed Asim, a 12-year-old disabled boy from Kerala, has been knocking on many doors so that he can continue his education.

Asim does not have hands. He has a 90% disability. He studies in class 7 at the Upper Primary School in Omassery panchayat in Kozhikode. The school is close to his home.

From the next academic year, which begins shortly, Asim will need to enroll in a higher secondary school. The closest one is at least five kilometers from his home.

Asim depends on his parents' help to travel to the school. Shifting to a school far away, will pose many problems.

Asim has requested the Kerala government to upgrade his upper primary schoolto a higher secondary school, so that he can continue studying there.

He has pleading for this for the last six months. He has met many ministers, but so far, no one has acted. He even met with the **Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan** last week. This was his second meeting with Vijayan in three months. Initially, Vijayan promised to help Asim. However, he has now told the family that the school cannot be upgraded.

Asim’s family wants the Kerala government to consider this a special case. AFacebook page Justice4Asim has been created. The tribute on the page reads:

#Jusitce4Asim is a tribute to the inspiring spirit of little Asim, who just wants his school upgraded. This is a campaign reminding Kerala Government to fulfill Asim’s desire at the earliest. If the school is upgraded to a High School level, it is just not Asim alone will benefit, but the entire village as well - Facebook campaign for Mohammed Asim

Asim has also written letters to **Union Ministers Sushma Swaraj and Prakash Javadekar** asking for help.

# 75. Special counter for disabled people opens in Hoshiarpur, Punjab

A special counter has been launched for disabled people at the District Administrative Complex in Hoshiarpur in Punjab.

The counter can be accessed by people with disabilities to resolve theirpension-related issues.

**Deputy Commissioner Vipul Ujwal** launched the counter. He said that the counter would provide adequate facility to people with disabilities.

People with disabilities can get any information regarding pension related matters from the counter. A district representative of the social security office will attend to them.

A special camp was also organized for disabled people at the SBAC Senior Secondary School in Bajwara on Saturday.

The camp was to help disabled people fill up forms for services such as disability certificate, disability pension, health insurance scheme 'Niramaya', wheelchairs, and identity cards (UDID).

Various government departments took part in the camp.

Representatives of the District Social Security Department, Health Department, and Department of Education were present at the camp

# 76. India fails to deliver on plans to provide surgeries to deaf children

The government of India has introduced schemes to provide treatment and surgeries to deaf children. However, few hospitals in India are conducting these surgeries. According to reports, very few children have undergone cochlear surgeries.

The Scheme of Assistance to Disabled Persons for Purchase/Fittings of Aids/Appliances (ADIP) has not been implemented well by the government of India or hospitals.

A question was raised in the Lok Sabha regarding the implementation of this scheme. Reports confirm that 323 cochlear surgeries were done in government hospitals. Private hospitals conducted 766 surgeries for the deaf. This is even though many hospitals have the facilities and funds to perform cochlear implants. They have simply not done these surgeries.

Many government hospitals in rural areas do not have many facilities. This puts the pressure on private hospitals.

**77. Kerala set to make history, two disabled candidates to be posted as deputy collectors**

The government of Kerala is all set to make history. The government is expected to announce the appointment of two disabled candidates to the post of deputy collectors.

Ajesh K, a visually impaired person from Payyannur, and Madhu K, who is mobility impaired, are the two candidates.

As per reports, the Kerala government may issue their posting orders today.

The two will become the first disabled candidates selected for the post of deputy collectors in the state.

This has become possible thorough the intervention of the Kerala Administrative Tribunal. The candidates' too have been fighting for justice since 2014.

Even after clearing the preliminaries, the final exams, and interviews for the posts of deputy collector, the rank list did not have any vacancies for disabled people.

The candidates' had then taken the matter to court.

# 78. Hospital in Uttar Pradesh slammed for using patient's amputated leg as a pillow

The staff at a hospital in Uttar Pradesh have been strongly criticized after a shocking video showed that an amputated leg of a patient was used as a ‘pillow’ to raise his head.

An investigation has been ordered.

According to news reports, the patient suffered terrible treatment at the hands of doctors and nurses at the Maharani Laxmibai Medical College in Jhansi, in Uttar Pradesh.

The patient was brought to the hospital after he was involved in a road accident. Doctors were forced to amputate his left foot and part of the lower leg.

After the video showed the man lying with the amputated limb under his head, **College Principal Sadhna Kaushik** accused the patient’s relatives of putting the cut off limb there.

However, the patient's relatives say this is a wrong statement. They said they found the amputated leg under his head. When they asked the hospital about it, no one said anything. None of the doctors listened to their pleas for a pillow.

A committee has been set up to probe the incident. Hospital authorities have promised strict action. Three hospital staffers have been suspended.

# 79. NGO Vision Aid is a ray of hope for blind people

Vision Aid Charitable Services is an NGO based in Visakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh. It is offering help to people who are blind or have low vision.

Dr. M S Raju started Vision Aid in 2004 at the age of 70 years. He realized that there is a lack of support for blind people in India.

Most people in India are not aware that vision impairment can be a genetic problem, without a cure.

It is vital to find ways that can help blind people become a part of the society. This can be done by creating educational and employment opportunities for them.

Vision Aid provides free classes. The classes include subjects like skill development, English language, and computer training. The aim is to enable blind people with skills so they can become independent.

The study module is extremely flexible. People can learn as per their convenience and time.

Vision Aid is also involved in the creation of assistive devices for people with vision impairments.

# 80. Rehabilitation homes for patients recovering from mental illness opened in Kerala

**Snehakkoodu** is the name of rehabilitation homes that have been opened recently in Kerala.

The rehabilitation homes are for people who have been cured of mental illness. They are ready to enter society again.

Snehakkoodu is a joint effort of the Kerala Health department's Arogya Keralam project, The Banyan, a mental health NGO, and the Tata Institute of Social Sciences.

The homes have been set up in Malappuram and Kozhikode. They can accommodate 100 people.

The homes are to help people who have been cured of mental illness to re-enter society. These are people who received treatment at the government mental health centres in Thrissur, Kozhikode, and Thiruvananthapuram. Only patients from these centers are eligible to be a part of Snehakkoodu.

Snehakkoodu will help out four types of mentally ill people:

• People abandoned by their families.

• People who do not wish to go back to their families.

• People with mental disabilities who are not able to pay attention, or work.

• People who have no memory of their families.

# 81. Admissions open at All India Institute of Speech and Hearing

The All India Institute of Speech and Hearing (AIISH) is inviting applications for their courses for the year 2018-19.

AIISH is one of the foremostspeech and hearingcolleges in India. Located at Manasagangothri in Mysuru, AIISH was established in the year 1965.

The institute is run by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare of India. In order to be selected, some courses will have an entrance examination. Others will be based on merit for the qualifying exam.

Here are the courses that are need an entrance exam for qualification:

* Bachelor of Audiology and Speech Language Pathology
* M.Sc in Speech-Language Pathology and M.Sc Audiology
* Master of Education Special Education (Hearing Impairment)
* Ph.D in Speech-Language Pathology, Audiology and Speech and Hearing

The Bachelor of Education in Special Education (Hearing Impairment) is a course that does not require an entrance examination for admission.

Diploma programs are also offered. These are diplomas in Hearing Aid and Ear Mould Technology, Early Childhood Special Education, and Hearing, Language and Speech.

The last date to submit applications is 2 May 2018.

# 82. Mary Jenitta, the matchmaker, is helping disabled people find partners

Mary Jenitta from Kottayam in Kerala, loves playing matchmaker! She has come up with something quite different and interesting.

Jenitta has started amatrimonial site to connect people with disabilities. Her aim is to help disabled people find partners for life.

The website www.heavenlycarecharitabletrust.org was founded in February this year, and seems to be attracting a lot of interest!

Jenitta’s idea to start such a site is born from personal experience. As an eight-month-old, she was affected by polio. She now walks with the help of crutches. Jenitta says that people with disabilities find it hard to form relationships.

Jenitta, who is 31 years old, has been fortunate to find love. Her husband, Libin Kurian, is her strongest support in this initiative to connect people with disabilities. Libin has a business in Ayurveda products.

Currently, the website operates from their home in Kottayam. Libin’s employees help her out when she needs.

In the future, the couple plans to offer financial assistance to disabled people, who find it hard to fund for their wedding.

The couples, who are blessed with an eight-month-old baby San Ealaijah, are determined to help disabled people find love and happiness!

# 83. Central government to look into causes for high number of deaf & speech impaired kids in this J&K village

The central government has decided to conduct a study a village in Jammu & Kashmir calledDhadkai. Located in Doda district, Dhadkai is also known as‘The Village of Silence’.

This is because the village has an abnormally high number of babies born with hearing and speech disabilities.

So far, three such studies have been conducted by various government ministries in this village.

The studies show that marriages between close relatives is a big cause for the high numbers of babies born with hearing disabilities in Dhadkai village.

So far, all the studies have indicated that the people of the village are not getting married to outsiders. This causes genetic defects in the newborns.

Results of the studies have been published in various medical Journals. They point out to the need for counseling of the villagers. They also highlight the importance of early detection and screening of babies.

The government is now hoping to come up with an action plan to provide a solution to the problem.

**84. Punjab to have center of excellence for disability sports in Zirakpur**

JALANDHAR: Local bodies minister [Navjot Singh Sidhu](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Navjot-Singh-Sidhu)has announced that work on the Rs 200 crore center of excellence for disability sports, which will be developed in Zirakpur on the Brazilian model, will start soon.

Addressing a press conference in the presence of internationally acclaimed and specially-abled players Rajinder Singh Rahelu and [Parvinder Singh](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Parvinder-Singh), he said the centre will provide world-class infrastructure to players. According to him, Government of India (GoI) will spend Rs 150 crore on the project. “The state government has given 10 acres of prime land worth around Rs 50 crore to the municipal council, Zirakpur. I cleared the file to this effect on Saturday evening,” he said, adding that the state government has agreed to allot land to the project, which has been hanging fire for a long time.

Expressing satisfaction at [Punjab](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/punjab) getting such an institute, he said two such centres would be established in [Visakhapatnam](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Visakhapatnam) and [Gwalior](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Gwalior). He also said world-class faculty members would be provided in the centre.

“The centre will be a breeding ground for producing para-Olympians, faculty, volunteers and technical staff of international repute. The state government will aim to send players to the para-Olympics scheduled to be held in Paris and Los Angeles in 2024 and 2028 respectively. We intend to create the facility and space for budding players to polish their skills further so that they bring laurels for the country by bagging medals in the para-Olympics” he said.

He announced that work on this upcoming project would be completed within two years.

# 85. World Glaucoma Week aims to spread awareness abut vision loss

Every year, the week of 10 to 17 March is marked as**World Glaucoma Week**.

The aim of this week is to spread awareness about glaucoma. Glaucoma is one of the leading causes of vision loss in the world.

Glaucoma is also called *Kala Motia* in India.

Data shows that the top five causes of blindness are - cataracts, refractive errors, glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, and diabetic retinopathy.

These disorders account for 75% of all visual impairments in the world.

Experts estimate that around 60 million people suffer from glaucoma globally. This number is expected to increase to 80 million by 2020 due to a rise in the aging population.

One-sixth of these patients will be in India. However, 90% of glaucoma patientsremain undetected in India.

This means that thousands of people are at a high risk of going blind.

Glaucoma is caused due to a slow and continuous damage to the optic nerve. This nerve takes signals from the eye to the brain.

There are many reasons why the optic nerve gets damaged. The most common reason is increased pressure inside the eyes.

Early detection of glaucoma can ensure that further damage to the optic nerve can be stopped to prevent loss of vision.

# 86. Odisha government directed to establish disability studies departments in universities

The Chief Commissioner for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs), **Dr Kamlesh Kumar Pandey**, has directed the government of Odisha to establish a Department of Disabilities Studies (DDS)in all universities in the state. This is to prepare professionals in the field of rehabilitation and special education.

At a recent review meeting with the state officials, the Chief Commissioner has suggested that a DDS or study center be established in at least one university, if its not possible to establish it in all universities right away. This will help in giving professional education to people interested in disabilities’ studies.

Dr Pandey said that a training institute to produce special educators in the state is also recommended. This would promote inclusive education to disabled children.

The Odisha government has appointed a full-time State Commissioner. However, important activities like district review, monitoring of funds given by the government, and mobile courts are affected due to shortage of staff.

Dr Pandey said there was a need to strengthen the office of the State Commissioner by appointing one Deputy Commissioner, Legal Officer, and other staff.

The State Commissioner has been urged to work closely with the Odisha Health Department to facilitate the issuing of disability certificates to eligible people. Around 60% certificates have been issued in Odisha until now.

Dr Pandey said that the state government also needs to generate awareness about different aspects of persons with disabilities, various schemes of the central and state governments, their rights, educational opportunities, and skill development up to panchayat level.

The Odisha government has been asked to increase the amount of disability pension, establish eye banks in all five medical colleges, implement more schemes for rehabilitation of disabled people, and come up with a policy for cochlear implantation for children with hearing impairments.

# 87. Insensitivity of officials makes it hard for students with disabilities in Assam

Students with disabilities in Assam say they face many barriers when it comes to pursuing their dreams of a higher education.

This is because many university authorities do not give these students the benefits offered to students with disabilities. Students’ say these issues have been raised from time to time, but there has been no change on the ground.

For instance, the guidelines of the University Grants Commission (UGC) say, there should be a 5% relaxation in marks for candidates belonging to certain groups, which include people with disabilities. But university officials do not give these facilities.

Many exam candidates have also complained that they were denied proper facilities and extra time as per the guidelines that have emerged in recent years.

This causes disaapointment among disabled students, as well as poor academic performance. In 2017, four blind candidates from Jorhat Blind School had a rude shock when they were told they would not get the extra four hours to write their exams. At another center, blind students were given only 20 minutes of extra time.

Disability rights groups say there is a need to change the attitude of education board officials from the top down.

# 88. Survey across 20 states finds that learning disabilities are on the rise

A study done by the Centre for Child Learningin New Delhi has found that about 4% of children enrolled in schools in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh have learning disabilities. These include Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder (ADHD) and dyslexia.

The survey was done in 20 states in India among children studying between classes 1 and 4. 25,000 schools were surveyed.

The study says that in most cases, learning disorders go undetected. Or they are reported as bad behavior or indiscipline.

ADHD is most commonly found among children, as against dyslexia. ADHD makes children less attentive as they cannot concentrate beyond a point. Teachers often call children with ADHD mischievous and destructive to the learning environment, says the study.

The report, released in February 2018, identifies memory disorders as well. This includes deficiency in mental retention of information among 3% of children surveyed. This condition makes it hard for students to remember what they have been taught. It also does not allow them to apply their learnings' during examinations.

Nearly 27% of the children were found to have dysgraphia. This is the inability to write legibly.

### Future steps recommended

The Centre for Child Learning has recommended that schools take active measures to identify children with learning disabilities. The report says,

The study is based on a sample survey. In reality, there could be more children who have learning disabilities. Teachers should be sensitized to identify them - Centre for Child Learning report, 2018

The experts behind the study say that once the disability is detected, children should be given special attention. This will help them feel integrated in the school system. Punishing them will drive them into a corner. They will not be able to learn throughout their academic life. This might even lead to dropouts.

The survey also looked at children who dropped out due to learning disabilities. In most cases, they were integrated only in their teenage years. This was after parents sought expert help to detect the disorder. The report adds,

Lost academic years of children with disabilities should not be considered a deterring factor that prevents their reintegration into schools- Centre for Child Learning report, 2018

# 89. National Association for the Blind offers training program in breast cancer detection for blind women

The Centre for Blind Women and Disability Studies at the National Association for the Blind in New Delhi, will offer a training program in breast cancer detection.

This is the second batch of the program being offered at the center. The training will be done by experts from the Discovering Hands Project.

This is a unique project started by Dr. Frank Hoffman, a senior gynecologist from Germany.

Dr Hoffman realized that blind women have a highly sensitized touch and tactile sense.

They can be trained to detect the smallest lumps of breast cancer. This helps in early and timely detection.

Once trained, the women are designated as Medical Tactile Examiners (MTEs).

MTEs are successful in detecting the smallest change in the chest tissue by using their sense of touch during a physical examination of the breasts.

NAB India is inviting applications from eligible blind girls for the second batch of the MTE training.

Here is information about candidates who are eligible to apply:

• Blind women with a minimum qualification of class 10.

• Age: between 18 to 55 years.

• Basic knowledge of science till class 8 is needed.

The duration of the course is 12 months. Candidates will be given training in computer skills, communication skills, breast specific psychology, and administrative tasks.

The training is to start from 1 April 2018. The time period for submitting applications is 15 February 2018 to 20 March 2018.

Selected candidates will get hostel facility and stipend.

Those interested can get more information from Veenita Gera at 9999397948, or Ajanta Pokhrel at (011) 41656266 and (011) 26852589. They can also write an email to nabindiacbw@hotmail.com.

**90. Course in basic computer fundamentals for visually impaired people to be held in Kochi**

A course in basic computer fundamentals for visually impaired people will be held in April. The program begins on 9 April 2018. It will be heldKochi in Kerala.

The program is called RCGF Surya’s Computer Fundamentals for Person with Vision Impairment.

The course is being organized at the initiative of the NGO, **RCG Foundation (RCGF)**, which was established in 2008. The mission of RCGF is to empower and rehabilitate people who are blind and have low vision. It does this by training them for employment opportunities.

Some of the courses offered here include those in English communication, mobility and personality developments. The idea is to enable people who are blind or have low vision to stand on their feet and secure a job.

The course in Computer Fundamentals is run in partnership with **Enable India-Bengaluru**. By collaborating, both organizations hope to use the strengths of each other to maximize the benefits for visually impaired people in the fields of computer literacy, domain specific training, and employability training.

The Computer Fundamentals course aims to:

* Provide computer literacy for visually impaired people.
* Make candidates self-reliant on computers to gain access to quality education.
* Enable candidates to be self-reliant to lead a quality life.

These are the details of the course:

* Name of the program - Computer Fundamentals for persons with vision impairment
* Duration - 8 weeks
* Mode - Onsite course
* Batch size - 16
* Student to Trainer Ratio - 8:1

The aim of the course is to:

* Orient people who are visually impaired in using computers independently.
* To make visually impaired people employable by providing computer knowledge.
* To enable them to use computers in the existing job, and for higher studies.
* The scope of this training does not include making candidates ready for employment. It only makes them ready for employability.

Candidates who have passed Class 10, are studying in college, and teachers who want to use computers at work are eligible. Such candidates will be selected on a first-come-first serve basis, with no evaluation test.

The details of the course are given below:

* Address - RCGF Surya, Vismaya Building, Ground Floor, Info-Park, Kakkanad, Kochi 682042
* Phone Number: 0484-4035537/8593838396
* Email - rcg.projectsurya@gmail.com
* Website: www.rcgfsurya.org

The curriculum will include<</p>

* Basic Computers: Includes concepts like file folder management, Basic MS word, Basic Excel, and Internet with the help of NVDA (screen reader)
* Basic Employability: Functional mobility, use of assistive technology and learn to take notes effectively.
* Life skills: Accepting disability, personal hygiene and personal grooming.

# 91. Advanced technology gives developed countries an edge in Winter Paralympics

The use of technology in sports is very common these days.

The latest gadgets are used to make sports more exciting and interesting for athletes and viewers.

In the ongoing Winter Paralympics, technology has made the games more accessible for disabled sportspersons.

However, most of this is available to para athletes from economically stronger countries.

As a result, they have an edge in events and win the medals.

The latest technology is used in various ways during the games. It is used for the broadcasting of games, as well as in designing equipment like racing wheelchairs and prosthetics.

Technology is being used to make the aids lighter in weight as well. They also have more usable features.

At present, lightweight aids are being developed for sportspersons with disabilities by richer countries.

However, accessibility experts say these devices will soon find their way into the market.

This means that they will be available to more people with disabilities in the future.

# 92. Ukraine wins 6 medals on day 4 of Paralympic Winter Games 2018

On the fourth day of the ongoing Paralympic Winter Games 2018, the Ukrainian national team won six medals.

Ukraine's Paralympics athletes won two gold, two silver and two bronze medals on the fourth day.

So far, the Ukrainian Paralympic team has won 15 medals in the overall medal standings: five gold, four silver and six bronze medals.

The Ukrainian team ranks second with 15 medals, following the United Statesthat has won 17 medals until now.

The games started in the South Korean city of PyeongChang on 9 March and will end on 18 March.

# 93. Lt Colonel Gaurav Dutta, India’s only para-triathlete, now trains national-level players

Lieutenant Colonel Gaurav Dutta is the only para-triathlete in India today. He has participated in over 12 events across the globe. Now he is motivating other disabled athletes to excel at sports.

His line-up of students is long. Most of them are gold medal winners.

Being a sportsman is no easy task. It takes a lot of practice, will-power and determination. Being a para-triathlete takes three times the effort!

Colonel Dutta also works closely with the Artificial Limb Centre in Pune. He helps former-military personnel, who have sustained severe injuries during duty, like he did.

Colonel Dutta lost his legs in a freak accident near Srinagar. He was brought down to Pune for further treatment. Having been an athlete all his life, Dutta was determined not to let his disability interrupt his life as a sportsperson.

When the doctor told him that he would start walking in a few months, Colonel Dutta asserted that he was going to run!

Being inside a hospital for 10 months is not easy. He was worried about lay ahead.

His personal experiences make him a great motivational speaker as well. He has taken on the responsibility of inspiring disabled sportspersons through his story so they have a positive attitude.

**94. Disabled begin Junagadh to Gandhinagar march**

# RAJKOT: A total of 22 [physically challenged persons](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/physically-challenged-persons) under the banner of [Shree Divyang Adhikar Manch](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Shree-Divyang-Adhikar-Manch) have begun a[foot march](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/foot-march) from [Junagadh to Gandhinagar](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Junagadh-to-Gandhinagar) to press for their[demands for pension](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/demands-for-pension), unemployment allowance and housing.

More disabled people are expected to join them from Rajkot and other cities en route with a charter of 11 demands that they are planning to put forward to chief minister Vijay Rupani. They are expected to reach the state capital after 14 days.
The march started from Sabalpool crossroads in Junagadh. Ramesh Korat, president of the organization, which is based in Mendarda, said, “For past one year, we have put forward this charter of 11 demands before the government and represented to everyone — from collector to the chief minister. But the government has paid no heed.”
The march is expected to reach Rajkot on Wednesday.
Besides pension and unemployment allowance, they also want the state government to make provision for houses under residential schemes like Pradhan Mantri Aawas Yojna. “Handicapped persons are considered a burden on the family. We don’t want to be burden and that is why we demand that the government provide us subsidized loan for self-employment so that we can live with self-respect,” Korat said.

**95. This innovative cushion gives some relief from heating issues faced by wheelchair users**

People who use wheelchairs face a common problem of overheating when sitting for long periods.

This happens as there is little or no air circulation around their backs. This leads to excessive heat and discomfort.

A company in Belgium, Staels Design has come up with an innovative way to avoid this heat and discomfort.

The product is called wheelAir cushion. This specially designed cushion uses battery-operated inbuilt fan technology.

The cushion comes in various sizes to fit the needs of different wheelchair-users. A lithium battery is used to operate the fan used in the cushion. The fan lasts for up to 20 hours. It can be re-charged using a micro USB charger.

The fan also comes with different settings for controlling the airflow system.

The cushion provides support to the back of the person on a wheelchair, while providing cool air.

The product has received a positive response. The first batch of 500 cushions have been sold in 10 countries.

People who sit for long hours at work can use the cushion. It can also be used by truck or taxi drivers, who spend long hours on the road.

# 96. Vitamin-B3 is may be effective for treating glaucoma, say researchers

Researchers are looking into whether Vitamin-B3 can be used in the treatment of glaucoma.

Glaucoma is a common eye defect that can lead to blindness. It occurs due to damage caused to the optic nerve.

Researchers in Australia are looking into the effects of Vitamin-B3 on glaucoma. They plan to start the first-ever human trial in this regard.

During this trial, patients with glaucoma will be treated with a high-dose of nicotinamide, which is also known as Vitamin B3.

The trial will be done over six months.

Scientists are hoping that Vitamin B3 can protect nerve cells from dying. This will help in the repair of the optic nerve and prevent loss of vision

# 97. OrCam MyEye, the innovative reading glasses, for people with low vision

The OrCam MyEye 2.0 has been shortlisted for the Health Innovation Award at theWearable Technology Awards 2018.

OrCam MyEye 2.0 is an artificial vision device. It aims to make reading easy for people who are low vision.

The device is the size of a finger It is based on a powerful artificial vision technology.

The device allows the user to read text from any surface. The user can also recognize faces, products, and bank notes.

The device is extremely fast and discreet.

It has been found to be useful for people who are blind, partially sighted, and have reading difficulties.

OrCam MyEye 2.0 can be easily mounted or fixed onto eyeglasses or sunglasses.

It is also hands free, and does not require a smartphone or Wi-Fi.

# 98. Sign language interpreters are making Winter Paralympics better

Winter Paralympics 2018 are currently underway in Pyeong Chang in South Korea. The Paralympics are being attended by more than560 athletes from 49 countries.

The games have become accessible and more enjoyable for people who are deaf and hard of hearing as there are sign language interpreters to offer help.

More than 12 sign language volunteers are present at the venues of the Winter Paralympics. They are offering much needed services to people who are deaf and hard of hearing.

The sign language interpreters are helping fans at the huge venue to find their way.

The presence of the sign language interpreters has made the games more enjoyable for visitors who are deaf and hard of hearing.

Even athletes with hearing disabilities are using the services of these interpreters.

They appreciate the effort made by the South Korean government to make the games accessible for them.

# 99. Microsoft holds accessibility camp in Jallandhar for disabled people

Multinational technology firm, Microsoft and Lovely Professional University came together to organize a unique accessibility camp in Jallandhar. The aim was to improve access to technology for people with disabilities.

The camp shared the best accessibility practices to enable disabled people to realize their full potential. It promoted digital inclusion. The aim was to ensure every person has equal access to information, communication technologies, facilities, and services of Microsoft.

The event featured a series of sessions that focused on the role of technology in creating sustainable models for skilling disabled youth. There was a special focus on the need for regulatory policies for innovation on accessible technologies and inclusive hiring practices.

Several technology-based projects that empower disabled people, innovations from NGOs, and assistive technologies developed by Microsoft were featured

# 100. Camps in Jammu to provide assistive devices to disabled students

The Artificial Limbs Manufacturing Corporation of India, Kanpur, (ALIMCO) is providing assistive devices free to disabled people at camps in Jammu in March. The camps are being organized in partnership with Indian Oil Corporation Limited, the district administration, and an NGO called Jammu and J&K Samaj Kalyan Kendra.

Two camps are being organized at the J&K Samaj Kalyan Kendra. It is located behind Satsang Hall Shahidi Chowk. The camps are on 17 and 27 March 2018.

The camp on 17 March is an Assessment Camp. Here the requirement of assistive devices will be assessed by experts. The devices that will be available are motorized tricycles, tricycles, wheelchairs, hearing aids, smartphones, cerebral palsy chairs, crutches, etc.

These devices will be fitted on 27 March. This camp will be held at the school run by the Samaj Kalyan Kendra at 9 AM.

People who want to get the benefits will have to come with their original Aadhaar cards as well as a photocopy of the card. They will also have to carry a photocopy of their disability certificate, one photograph showing the disability, and proof of income (should be less than Rs. 15,000 per month).

# 101. Karnataka High Court imposes heavy fine on Air India for losing the wheelchair of disabled passenger

The Karnataka High Court has asked Air India to deposit Rs 5 lakh with them for failing to transport the wheelchair of a disabled passenger.

According to the petitioner, Rajalakshmi, who is a disabled woman, her travel to London was inconvenienced to a great degree due to the inefficiency of Air India officials.

She said that her customized wheelchair was missing from the baggage after she reached the airport in London. Airport authorities in London did not provide her with a wheelchair. They made her sit in a bench, which was not fit for a disabled person.

When Rajalakshmi and her family approached Air India staff, they said that the wheelchair has not been sent from India. They also said they would make arrangements for the wheelchair to arrive the very same day

However, the wheelchair arrived only the next day, and the petitioner missed her flight to Scotland. This led to heavy monetary losses and mental agony.

Rajalakshmi has also filed a case against the travel agent for not providing the facilities required for people with disabilities during travel. Rajalakshmi was put in a hotel room that did not have facilities for a disabled person. She lost money and faced health issues as well.

Rajalakshmi has asked the court to provide her a refund of the money from the travel agent as well as compensation for medical expenses. She also wants Air India to refund her ticket and arrange a trip from London to Switzerland.

The High Court of Karnataka will hear the petition again on 3 April 2018. .

# 102. This Indonesian dentist is a crusader for disabled people in her country

Annita Foe is an activist and a dentist from Indonesia who has been working for the rights of people with disabilities in her country. She is also the vice president of Yayasan Surya Kebenaran International. This is a foundation that runs health clinics and provides other basic services for the poor in the region of North Sumatra.

Annita decided to step into the disability space 10 years ago. She was working in a clinic when a disabled woman came for a treatment. She noticed how the woman struggled to move from her wheelchair to the dentist’s chair.

Post treatment, Annita asked her what help she needed. The woman replied that if Annita wanted to do something, it must be for her friends who do not have legs. This answer shook Annita.

Annita decided to do her bit for people with disabilities in Indonesia. She raised funds for 8000 prosthetic limbs for people in different parts of Indonesia. Many of them were born with disabilities. Some of them lost their legs in accidents, while others had health issues.

Many of them were confined to their homes by their families. There was much stigma attached to a disability in some families. Many disabled children were not even registered by parents in government records.

These attitudes are changing now. Activists in Indonesia and disabled people are speaking up for their rights.

With people like Annita Foe working for the rights of disabled people, Indonesians hope things will change even more for the better!

**103. 50 government buildings disabled 'unfriendly'**

INDORE: An [audit](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/audit) conducted by social justice department showed that most of the government buildings of Indore district, be it schools/colleges, gardens and theatres/auditoriums, are not completely disabled-friendly.
Under the ‘Accessible India’ campaign launched in 2015, the Centre had set a deadline of July 2016 to conduct accessibility audit of at least 50 most important government buildings of Indore district and convert them into fully accessible.

“Following the instructions, we had roped in officials of Public Works Department (PWD) to conduct the audit. Reports related to 50 government buildings have been sent to the Centre,” social justice department’s joint director, BC Jain told TOI.

However, local authority didn’t comply with Centre’s instructions to send the accessibility report within the given timeframe and documents were sent late by January, 2017.

Even the Centre has delayed the project as after getting the report, it is yet to release any fund to carryout required infrastructural changes in selected buildings to make them completely disabled [friendly](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/friendly).
“Based on the audit report of 50 government buildings, the Centre has initially selected two structures - district collectorate and Mata Jijabai Government Girls College and sanctioned a fund of Rs 13.90 lakh and Rs 1.32 crore for making required infrastructural changes to make it fully accessible. The fund is however yet to be released,” Jain said.
As per the instructions, the selected government buildings must set up ramps, rails, lifts, wheelchair-users, auditory signals, tactile flooring and brain signage were among facilities to be arranged for disabled persons.
Among top 50 government buildings of Indore district, collectorate, police headquarter, SDM offices, BSNL office in Foothi Kothi, IMC headquarter and all zone offices, Agriculture College, Income-Tax office, DAVV, district education office, Residency Kothi, MP Tourism Development Corporation’s office, Electricity Board, Employment office, Lalbagh, Nehru Park, Regional Park, Meghdoot Garden, Zoo, Usharaje Stadium, MGM Medical College, Divisional Commissioner’s office, Gandhi Hall and Ravindra Natya Griha are included.

**104. Some vital information about glaucoma**

Glaucoma is an eye disease that can cause blindness if not treated in time.

Here is some more information about the eye disease.

1. Glaucoma has no symptoms in most of the cases. Even people with a 20/20 vision can have glaucoma and not be aware of it.
2. Family medical history, age and ethnicity are some factors that can result in glaucoma.
3. It has been found that people of African, Caribbean or Asian origin are at higher risk of getting affected by glaucoma.
4. Eye tests to detect the presence of glaucoma are not painful and take very little time.
5. The disease can affect the eyes at any age.
6. The progress of the disease can be stopped with timely detection and treatment.
7. A regular eye check-up is recommended by experts to ensure their health.

# 105. India's first online teacher training course for people with deafblindness launched

Sense International India (SII) has launched India’s first online teacher training course for educators of people with deaf blindness.

The number of people who are deaf blind in India could be over five lakh, but there are no records. Experts say that deaf blindness is complex disability as it becomes very challenging to communicate given that 95% of communication happens through these two senses.

SII has been supporting, educating, creating awareness, and providing opportunities for children and adults with deaf blindness across 22 states. They are networked with 59 partners.

The aim of the online course is to make it more accessible to people across the world. Experts say that many people want to work in this field, but do not have access to proper resources.

The six-month course will be a predominantly interactive session through Skype. Instructors will show candidates how to teach in sign language, Braille, and other methods.

There is also a hands-on training module where candidates will be sent to SII centers for a brief period.

# 106. National Career Service Centre for Differently-Abled in Ludhiana launches programs for disabled in Punjab, Haryana & Chandigarh

The district administration in Ludhiana has encouraged people with disabilities to apply for the many programs that are soon to be started by the National Career Service Centre for Differently-Abled (NCSC for DA) to make themselves independent.

The centre was established by the Indian government in Ludhiana to help disabled people living in Punjab, Haryana, and Chandigarh.

Disabled people reporting to the center will be interviewed, guided, counseled, and motivated for jobs, self employment, training, and higher education. The aim is to make them economically independent.

The center will start fresh batches of six-month training for disabled people for the academic year 2018-19.

The center will also offer courses in commercial, metal, hosiery, cutting and tailoring, and radio and TV trade. There is hotel facility provided for boys as well.

Those interested can approach the center for the free application form or send a request letter. Organizations working for disabled people, special schools, and NGOs can apply for bulk admissions.

The training is totally free of cost.

Applicants have to be Indian citizens in the age group of 15-50 years. They must have a disability of 40% or more. They have to submit the application form before 23 March, with a set of supporting documents. These include a disability certificate, Aadhaar card, bank passbook, caste certificate, certificate for qualification, and two passport size photos.

Those interested can call the numbers - 0161-2490883 or 0161-2970120.

# 107. Social enterprise develops innovative game for sign language

SeeCom (Reo-a-Karu), is a social enterprise started in Canada, offers sign language classes and products for disabled people.

SeeCom is developing a new interactive sign language game to help people to communicate with each other.

If you thought that sign language was only for the deaf, you are wrong! It can be used for children with disabilities and their parents as well.

The new game that has been developed by SeeCom will trace the body movements of the gamer. It will also trace signs to do different things as part of the game.

For example, users can type JUMP or SWIM, and the characters in the game would do the same! SeeCom is currently working on producing the full version of the game.

SeeCom has also launched new sign posters and flash cards.

According to the company founder, one of the biggest challenges is that people think sign language is only for the deaf. But in fact, sign language can be used by anyone! It is not a language only for the deaf. There are more than 300 sign languages

Sign language can be used as a support language for babies, toddlers, and children with learning disabilities. A reminder that sign language is empowering

**108. Book download and end users report for the month of February 2018 for Sugamya Pustakalaya.**
Key observations are:

1.      Now there are 22 member libraries that have contributed books to the
platform. NAB Sikkim and Young Scholars Book Bank started uploading books in this month.
2.      Number of download by users of other libraries crossed the figure of
10000 downloads. Total downloads are 14506. Average download per day is 22. Decrement of 10 books per day in this period. This figure is very important as  you can see that almost 70% beneficiaries are those who are not direct members of library that has produced  accessible format of the book. This also means that all these members would not have been able to read these books in absence of the Sugamya Pustakalaya.
3.      131 new uses joined Sugamya Pustkalaya in the month of February.
Highest 37 users joined Saksham-Delhi Library and 23 new uses joined Samarthanam Trust for the disabled and 22 new user joined Arushi, Bhopal Library. . We need to move at a much faster pace in this department. I appeal to all member libraries to register all members of their institutions on the Sugamya Pustakalaya. I have heard from few saying that they are uploading data of members who have computers or smart phones. I would like to urge that please do not wait for confirmations for this. We must get all our members registered on this platform. This will help us in many ways and better planning and management of our library services.
4.      Total books uploaded on the online library till 28th February are
7361. Here too, we now have the option of uploading the metadata of the book and uploading of the downloadable file can happen later or when a request for a book is made.  We need to have our complete catalogues of books uploaded on Sugamya Pustakalaya ASAP. This will help us to avoid duplication of production of books.
5.      New books uploaded between 1 February to 28th February are 559. In
this month highest number of 411 books contributed by NAB Delhi Library and Saksham Delhi Contributed 90 books .
6.      Highest number of downloads from National Talking Book Library 244
downloads in this period.
7.      Total titles downloaded are 2355. New titles downloaded between 1st
February to 28th February are 138. In this month highest number of 41 new titles downloaded from National Talking Book Library and 28 new titles downloaded from RSVI library .
Top three performers in terms of total downloads are:
Saksham : 5205 downloads with 1403 books

NIEPVD Talking book library : 4361 downloads with 1502 books

NAB Delhi : 1861 downloads with 977 books uploaded on the library.

Attached Excel file “books download report” Sheet 1 contains data as on
28 February and sheet 2 contains data as on 31 January.

**109. One more path breaking achievement of National Self advocacy moment of the visually challenged**

Dear Readers,

As you may be aware that recently Indian Railway has notified two massive recruitment for filling up around 90,000 vacancies comprising of assistant loco pilot, various technicians and helpers/attendance. But as ever, the RRB ignored the prevailing rules relating scheme of job reservation for persons with disability and facilities/relaxations for enabling them to compete with their non disabled counter parts at a level playing ground.

National Federation of the Blind (India)(leading self help organization of the blind in the country) took it seriously and challenge the said recruitment notifications in hon'ble high court of Delhi.

The recruitment notifications were basically suffering with following 3 infirmities

1. The blind persons were declared in eligible to apply under this recruitment notification despite many of the jobs in term of the said notification are identified for both blind and low vision.

2. Only around 70 vacancies were reserved for V.H category and they were also for low vision  while as per section 34 of the right to persons with disability act 2016 minimum 1% of the total vacancies should have been reserved for each group of specified disabilities that comes equallent to 895 vacancies.

3. It was made mandatory for the V.I. applicants to provide all the details/particulars of the scribe at the time of filling online applications.

On the behalf of the federation the matter was argued by its general secretary Sri. S.K. Rungta who himself is a visually challenged and designated Senior Advocate in Delhi high court.  As a result of  effective and logical advocacy of Mr. Rungta the railway was directed to issue a corrigendum with regard to rectify the infirmities in its concerned recruitment notification during the first hearing of 27th February 2018 and  in term of its corrigendum of dated 1st March 2018 Railway allowed the blind persons to apply for various posts identified for them under the above mentioned recruitment notifications and also agreed to re work out the quantum of reservation for VH Category in accordance with  Sec 34 of the RPD act.

But RRB was still relactuant to relax the condition of provide the particulars of scribe at the time of filing online applications. But after the second hearing in the matter on dated 5th March 2018 hon�ble high court of Delhi pass an order of directing the RRB to relax its condition until the date of examinations are notified. In term of such order of hon�ble high court of Delhi RRB had to agree to do so.

In this way the pro active approach and self advocacy of NFB poud the way for our many thousand visually impaired brothers and sisters to avail the opportunity in order to compete for atleast  900 jobs in Railway for them in term of its present recruitment  notification.

Present status

After all necessary modifications and rectifications in initial recruitment notification the following points may be noted with regard to make online applications.

1. The last date to apply is now 31st March 2018

2. Blind persons are also eligible to apply for the post identified for them

3. The reservation quota given to the V.H. category will be reworked out in due course of time before 1st May

4. To fill up the details of the scribe in application is now optional and not mandatory.

5. Application fees applicable to persons with disability is Rs.250 which will be refunded after appearing in the exam.

I would also like all of you to be informed that NFB Karnataka is going to come with an advisory for the benefit of all our Karnataka residing V.I. brothers and sisters who are eligible and willing to apply for the present recruitment of railway. This advisory will contain the zone wise vacancy position in identified posts and all other necessary instructions to be followed in making successful application and sailing throughout the recruitment process.

**110. Celebrations of International Womens Day with visual impaired womens in Bangalore**

State Women Committee of NFB Karnataka jointly with Narayana Netralaya Bangalore held a program on 10th March 2018 to mark the International Women’s day. The event was organised at Auditorium of Narayana Netralaya. Around 35 women’s/girls with visual disability from different parts of the state participated in this one day event.

A lecture and interaction session was conducted on health care of women by a expert gynecologist.

Other attraction of the event included

A competition event “Cooking without fire”, enlightening tips for personality development, carrier selection and use of assistive technology, etc.

Outstanding personality and only visually impaired women charted accountant in the country Ms. Rajani Gopal grace the occasion as chief guest.

The winners of the competition were awarded with lucrative prizes

All participants and guests were felicitated with the fantastic gift of wax candles in different designs and models manufactured by the visually impaired workers.

program went well and appreciated by all concerns

Let us congratulate and complement Ms. Haseena Husain, coordinator state women committee NFB Karnataka and Mrs. Sindhu Khannan who was in dual role of representing both the organizations Narayana netralaya Bangalore as its senior officer in department of ophthalmologic rehabilitation and state women committee of NFB Karnataka as its chairpersons.

**3. Announcement**

## 1. Mitra Jyothi announces the next batch of Basic Computer Training for VI Candidates - 09 April 2018 to 9 June 2018

Dear Readers we are pleased to inform you of basic computer training course to be undertaken by Bangalore based pioneering NGO Mitra Jyothi charitable trust for disabled. please refer the below reproduced details.

**Course Duration:** 2 Months from

**Who should join this course?**

* VI Students who have completed Class 10 or above and are pursuing their studies will be given highest priority.
* Candidates who have completed their graduation and are seeking skill development to get into good jobs.
* Candidates who seek to be independent and look forward to employ-ability training & over-all personality development.
* Candidates who have written their exams and are awaiting their results before taking the next step ahead and those doing who are doing distance education

**Why should you join this course?**

* To open-up a whole new world of Education and Awareness by making yourself “Computer Literate” and become “Internet Savvy”
	+ To start using computers to support your Education.
	+ To read online, to use the internet, for e Commerce and social networking
	+ Email communication
* To improve your personal competencies with the help of our personality development sessions
* To improve your communication skills with our spoken English classes
* To enhance your English writing skills and spellings
* To improve your Orientation and Mobility skills and become independent
* To know your rights and how to exercise them with the help of our Legal Awareness class
* To seek guidance avail help from Mitra Jyothi’s Job Placement cell which will facilitate placement support for trained candidates if they are eligible for the same.

**Course Content:**

It is a 2 month residential fun filled life skill development program for the visibly impaired with Personality Development sessions, spoken and written English classes, Orientation and Mobility Training along with learning Computer skills with Windows 10 Operating System.

* Introduction to Computers

o   Machine, Keyboard and Screen orientation

o   Typing lessons with ‘Talking Typer”

o   Screen Reader – Introduction to NVDA and NVDA training

o   Software and hardware overview

o   Storage devices

o   Computer Accessories

o   Screen Navigation and maneuvering across screens and tabs

o   Introduction to Windows

o   Files and file management

o   Notepad, Calculator and other simple programs

o   Software downloads

o   Using MS Office Products with emphasis on Microsoft Word

o   Internet and browser screen navigation

o   Email usage and email etiquette including outlook mail

* Enriching experiences with peer groups

**Other Activities:**

* Workshops on Legal Literacy, Health & Hygiene education.
* Workshop on support systems and assistive devices available for people with low vision
* Experience sharing from successful VI candidates from various Multinational Companies
* Visits to a bank and ATMs specially designed for the visually impaired
* Career Guidance
* Cultural events

**Teaching aides and equipment used:**

* Computers with

o   Windows 10 operating system and Office 2013

o   NVDA

o   Talking Typer

o   Spell tool

o   Head sets

o   Self paced exercises for each concept

o   Tactile Diagrams

o   Monthly Tests and final assessment

o   Curriculum designed with computer concepts and educational needs

* Other training equipment for O&M training

**Course Format:**

Residential 2 month course with separate in-house dormitories for men and women.
Computer classes from 9:30 AM to 5:00 PM from Mon to Sat with specific time slots for;

* English classes
* Personality development sessions
* O&M training hours
* Planned dates for workshops and events

**Facilities:**
Food and accommodation will be provided for the duration of the course at Mitra Jyothi Campus

**Eligibility:**

Must have completed class 10 and know basic English.

**Joining Procedure:**

* Call Mitra Jyothi at Ph: 080-22587623/25 Ext. 30, talk to Mr. Mansoor or or Ext. 21 Ms.Chaithra and register yourself if you are eligible!
* A basic telephonic screening/interview to check eligibility will be conducted
* Registration fee for the course is Rs.200. This needs to be paid at the time of admission
* Refundable deposit of Rs.500 has to be paid at admission time. This will be reimbursed at the end of the course if the trainee has a minimum attendance of 90%
* Training and Accommodation fee will be a nominal amount of Rs.1000/month
* All students may stay at Mitra Jyothi's dormitory during the course of the training
* The training is open to boys/men and girls/women.

**2. Intensive Training Course For Visually Impaired Women at All India Confederation of the Blind (Delhi)**

Intensive Training Course For Visually Impaired Women

The All India Confederation of the Blind has been conducting Intensive training courses for the benefit of visually impaired girls for last several years under the sponsorship of Marga Schulze Foundation/CBM (Germany). The participants are imparted intensive practical training and theoretical instructions in home management, basic stitching, mobility, computer applications, self-defence techniques and leadership skills.

This year the course shall commence from 24th May to 30th June. The candidates having minimum qualification of B.A. first year shall be eligible to apply. Selected candidates shall get free boarding, lodging and training facilities. The best ten or more participants shall also be provided best quality laptops with screen readers on behalf of Marga Schulze Foundation/CBM. Preference shall be given to participants from other states. The participants shall receive train fare at concessional rate by AC 3 tier. Those who are interested should contact AICB office or AICB website [www.aicb.org.in](http://www.aicb.org.in/) and should download application form by clicking link ‘upcoming events’. Their application forms duly filled and signed should reach AICB office latest by 31st March, 2018 along with non-refundable bank draft of Rs. 1000/- in the name of All India Confederation of the Blind (Delhi).

**3. Weekend Computer classes at NFB Karnataka**

We take this opportunity to remind our readers NFB Karnataka conducts weekend computer training class on every Sunday at its principal office located in Bharat Nagar Magadi Main Road Bangalore. This class is conducted for those V.I. brothers and sisters in and around Bangalore who cannot join any regular computer learning course due to various reasons.

In this class orientation, counseling, practical training of computer applications are given to the class attendees, as per their individual needs

Attending the classes is absolutely free of charge.

Time : 10.00AM to 5.00 PM (Every Sunday)

willing attendees may make their registration with all their contact details on or before every Friday.

For registration and more information Mrs. Lakshmi may be contacted at : 080-23484794 Mob: 9916368800

**4. Information**

# 1. Some tips for disabled students on using a scribe effectively

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) gives many concessions for students who come under the Candidates With Special Needs (CWSN) category.

Among the concessions granted to disabled students taking their board exams is that he or she is entitled to a scribe or an exam writer to write the paper.

Students with disabilities can choose their own scribe or exam writer.

There are some important things to remember if you are a student with a disability and are using a scribe for the first time.

* Make sure you have several practices reading out your answers before the exam. This is to make sure you get used to the idea. This way your attention is focused on answering the question.
* Remember that the scribe is there to write. They are not supposed to engage in the content.
* Practice speaking in well-formed sentences so that your answers are clear.
* Practice framing your answers with someone you don’t know well. This is because it is hard to speak formally with family or friends.
* Use old exam questions and practice answering them.
* Keep time limits the same as your actual exam.
* At the exam hall, think about what you want to say before you say it.
* If you get stuck for a word, don’t panic. Take a breath and relax. Start your thought again.
* If you lose track of what you were thinking, you can ask the scribe to read backwhat has been written

.

**2. Important CBSE circular for writing exams for PWD candidates**

Dear Readers,

We are glad to reproduced below a new circular of CBSE specifying the new provisions for those visually impaired examinees who are willing to take their examination by use of computer. please refer the below given notification and disseminate it among your contacts as widely as possible.

NOTIFICATION

Principals / Heads of the Institutions All CBSE affiliated Schools

The Examination Committee of the Board in its meeting held on 16.02.2018, resolved to consider granting following additional concessions / facilities for Candidates with Special Needs (CWSN) Category from the examination year 2018 and onwards.

A.       USE OF COMPUTER IN WRITING the examination as per the actual need and skills of the students with disabilities.

It may be allowed as per the actual need and skills of the students with disabilities duly supported by certificate issued by registered medical practitioners / qualified psychological consultants recommending use of Computer facility for writing the examination citing the ground on which recommendation for use of computer has been made. Such permission shall be subject to the followings:

I.                                  Use of computer shall be limited to only for typing answers, for viewing the questions in the enlarged font size, for listening the question items. Concerned candidate shall bring his / her own computer or laptop duly formatted and the Centre Superintendent shall allow such candidate after an inspection by the Computer teacher and the same teacher may do the monitoring of the use of the computer. CS may compensate for the loss of time if any and record the same.

II.                              The computer / laptop brought by the candidate will not have any internet

connection so as to maintain the sanctity of the examination.

III.                          The candidate shall use the computer / laptop for the purpose for which permission has been taken.

IV.                         Such requests along with specific recommendation by the registered medical practitioners / qualified psychological consultants,shall be sent to the Centre Superintendent (CS) by the candidate through school. Concerned CBSE Regional Office, will examine the case based on merit and obtain CBSE HQ approval or otherwise based on merit and documents.

V.
Print out of the answer written by the candidate using computer will be arranged by the Centre Superintendent and each page of the print will be signed by the Invigilators,Computer teacher, CS mentioning Total pages, Roll No, Subject, Subject code, QP code and Centre Code etc. on the top cover page.

B.          PROVISION OF READER in case student with disability DOES NOT WANT THE FACILITY OF SCRIBE and need a person to read the question paper.

Provision of Reader to read the question paper in case student with disability does not want scribe facility, may be allowed but the Role Of Such Person Will Be Limited To Reading Of Question Paper. Centre Superintendent will make arrangement for proper invigilation in such cases. Request for such permission will be made by the candidate through principal with specific recommendation by the registered medical practitioners / authorized psychologist. Such cases will be referred to the CBSE RO by the school principal and permission may be accorded by the CE, CBSE on case to case basis based on merit. Such candidates will not be allowed to use scribe facility.

C.          RELAXATION IN MANDATORY ATTENDANCE may be granted if any student with disability could not attend the school for prescribed days.

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Relaxation in attendance upto 50% may be considered and allowed at RO level to such candidates with disability who could not attend the school for prescribed days. Such recommendations with attendance details must come from the Principal of the school of the candidate alongwith supporting certificate from the registered medical practitioners / authorized psychologist. Cases less than 50% attendance alongwith supporting documents,may be referred to the HQ for consideration and approval or otherwise by the Controller of Examinations, CBSE.

(K.K. CHOUDHURY) CONTROLLER OF EXAMINATIONS

Copy to the respective Heads of Directorates, Organizations and Institutions as indicated below with a request to disseminate the information to all the schools under their

jurisdiction:

1.           The Additional Director General of Army Education, A - Wing, Sena Bhawan, DHQ, PO, New Delhi- 110001.

2.           The Secretary AWES, Intergrated Headquarters of Mod (Army), FDRC Building No.

202, Shankar Vihar (Near APS), Delhi Cantt- 110010

3.           The Under Secretary (EE-1), MHRD, Govt, of India, Department of SE&L, Shastri

Bhawan, New Delhi -01                      A

4.           All Regional Directors/Regional Officers of CBSE with the request to send this

circular to all the Heads of the affiliated schools of the Board in their respective!

## 3. Be aware to use Nammavaani/Hamari Vaani plat forms for vice versa interaction with in the visually disability sector.

Dear Readers, we consider it worth rementioning about the “Namma vaani” and “Hamari Vaani” interactive portals which are being operated by Bangalore based prestigious NGO “Enable India”

Please refer below reproduced details of the said portals carefully and ensure to make its best use.

This is the time of starting admissions at school and colleges and commencement of various vocational and professional training programs. So the concerned NGO/Institutions can come on this two platform Namma Vaani and Hamari Vaani.  Namma Vaani is Kannada plat form and Hamari Vaani is Hindi plat form.  Namma Vaani number is 9266344111, Hamari Vaani number is 9266344222.

Even job opportunities for persons with disabilities can be recorded in this plat form and all the news connected to government schemes, technology information, assistive aids used by persons with disabilities information etc.

In this plat form you can give information and take information free of cost already candidates are using this plat form now it is desired the NGOs to come on the plat form so that the candidates can use the NGO details through Namma Vaani and Hamari Vaani.

This is an audio plat form those who login this number by giving miss call will get call back and they can listen the information, can save the information, can give information but the information should be connected to persons with disability no other information is allowed.  The NGO can use this plat form to promote the NGO,   to source candidate, to give awareness of the disability, various training conducted by NGO etc.  If you like this please share the number to your candidates and other disabilities friends let them use this opportunity and get informations.

If you have any doubt please call on 080 67323636 to contact Namma Vaani team if you have any confusion starting handholding will be done by the operating organizations.

**4. Some Important International Publications and tools for empowerment of persons with disability**

**European Human Rights Report on 2030 Agenda**

The European Disability Forum (EDF) presented its second human report entitled “2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) report: A European perspective to respect, protect and fulfil the United Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities”. The report provides an overview of the strong link between the CRPD and the SDGs and presents recommendations on how to ensure Europe takes a human rights based approach to the Sustainable Development agenda, fully including persons with disabilities.  This report, presented during the [SDGs conference](http://www.edf-feph.org/newsroom/news/sustainable-development-must-be-inclusive-persons-disabilities), has been designed as a resource for organisations of persons with disabilities and decision-makers in Europe to learn more about the 2030 Agenda and what opportunities exist for advocacy around the SDGs in order to respect, protect and fulfil the CRPD, in Europe and in international cooperation. The board members of EDF agreed to adopt a [resolution](http://www.edf-feph.org/sites/default/files/edf_resolution.doc) where they call on the EU to fully include persons with disabilities in all policy dialogues regarding the SDGs, in Europe and in the context of international cooperation. The report can be downloaded at:[https://bit.ly/2pK74Vc](https://bit.ly/2pK74Vc%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

**Leveraging Technology for Greater Access to Justice**

The Global Initiative for Inclusive ICTs (G3ict) has published a paper on how courts and justice systems can leverage technology to support greater access to justice for persons with disabilities. The paper recommends eight strategies, including: amending existing legal frameworks to promote equality in courts and justice systems; training leaders and staff to better design and implement ICT accessibility strategies; using the “power of the purse” to advance equality by purchasing only accessible courtroom technology; and involving persons with disabilities at each step in the process. This follows the statement that G3ict made on the same issue to the Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. As a next step, G3ict will soon announce an online survey to gather additional insight and perspective on this topic and is partnering with the International Disability Alliance to deploy it broadly to Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (DPOs). Website: <http://g3ict.org/>

**Let Me Decide and Thrive, a report on access to sexual and reproductive health and rights**

In December 2017, Plan International launched Let Me Decide and Thrive - a report on recent research regarding discrimination and exclusion of girls and young women with disabilities and their access to sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). The report calls for all girls and young women with disabilities to be provided accessible information and services, including comprehensive sexuality education so they can make conscious choices about relationships and sexuality. It also calls for governments to eliminate the stigma and discrimination that prevent girls from accessing the services and information they need about sexual and reproductive health. The report is available at: <https://plan-international.org/publications/let-me-decide-thrive-srhr-disability>

**Launch of Disability Rights Defenders Newsletter**

Independent Living Institute launched the newsletter that links persons with disabilities and their organizations, Human Rights lawyers, law students and their instructors as well as government entities interested in using strategic litigation in implementing the UN CRPD and other international and national legislation.  In the free quarterly newsletter shares news such as court decisions, announcements, events concerning disability rights; discusses legal issues regarding disability-based discrimination and implementing the rights of persons with disabilities; presents experts, examples of coalitions and campaigns. Subscribe from:[https://bit.ly/2ufy2Zn](https://bit.ly/2ufy2Zn%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank); Contact: Adolf Ratzka (adolf.ratzka@independentliving.org)

 **[Useful tools]**

**Global Map of Women's & Disabilities Rights Advocates and Organizations**

Women Enabled International’s Global Map of Advocates for the rights of women and girls with disabilities continues to grow.  This interactive map, along with its accompanying appendices, highlights hundreds of organizations that work to advance the rights of women and girls with disabilities worldwide.  Since its release in March 2016, over 620 organizations have been added. Global Map of Advocates can be found at: <https://www.womenenabled.org/mapping-results.html>

**Mobile App: Voice of Specially Abled People (VoSAP)**

Voice of SAP is an Actionable Advocacy mobile App for Empowering Specially Abled People or Persons with Disabilities. It allows for crowd sourced data on accessibility, pledges of their leaders and community members, solutions, and issues news on disability. VoSAP volunteer team worked with an Indian bank – Bank of Baroda (BoB), which resulted in making BoB branches wheelchair accessible. The VoSAP App can be downloaded at: [Appstore for iOS](https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/voice-of-sap-vosap/id1265835335?ls=1&mt=8) or [GooglePlay for Android](https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.vosap&hl=en) ; More information on BoB initiative can be found at: <https://bit.ly/2Ee4HhL>; Story behind the development of the App is available at:<https://bit.ly/2In4sDG>

**The guide to attending a sporting event for persons with disabilities**

The guide that provides information on accessibility at sports venues in the U.S., such as stadiums and arenas is available online.  More information about the guide can be found at: <https://www.sportfacts.org/guide-to-attending-a-ballgame-for-disabled-special-needs-senior-citizens/>

 For availment of all above mentioned publications and tools and to know more about them please follow the below given contact details

**CONTACT INFORMATION**

Secretariat for the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Division for Social Policy and Development (DSPD)

Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA)

United Nations Headquarters, New York, NY 10017, USA

BE INFORMED! GET INVOLVED!

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/pages/United-Nations-Enable/196545623691523](http://www.facebook.com/pages/United-Nations-Enable/196545623691523)

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/UN_Enable>

Website: [www.un.org/disabilities](http://www.un.org/disabilities)

Email: enable@un.org

**5. Employment**

**1. Recruitment for Odisha Adarsha Vidyalaya Sangathan**

Job title: Principal and Teachers

Total post: 1429

Reservation for Blind and Low vision –27

Last date for apply – 10.4.2018

For more details please visit: [www.oavs.in](http://www.oavs.in)

**2. Recruitment for Cantonment Board Pune**

Job title: Teachers & Clerk

Total post: 34

Reservation for Blind and Low vision – 2

Last date for apply – 7.4.2018

For more details please visit: [www.punecantonmentboard.org](http://www.punecantonmentboard.org)

**3. Recruitment for India Office of the Chief Postmaster General Telangana Circle**

Job title: Postman/Mail-Guard

Total post: 23

Reservation for Blind and Low vision – 1

Last date for apply – 21.4.2018

For more details please visit: [www.indiapost.gov.in](http://www.indiapost.gov.in)

**4. Recruitment for Lecturers in Morarji Desai Residential Colleges through KPSC**

Job title: Lecturers

Total post: 294

Reservation for Blind and Low vision – 6

Qualification : P.G

Last date for apply – 24.4.2018

For more details please visit: [www.kpsc.kar.nic.in](http://www.kpsc.kar.nic.in)

**5. Recruitment for National Bank for Agriclture and Rural Development, Mumbai**

Job title: Officer Grade post

Total post: 92

Reservation for Blind and Low vision – 4%

Last date for apply – 2.4.2018

For more details please visit: [www.nabard.org](http://www.nabard.org)

**6. Recruitment for Forest Research Institute, Dehradun**

Job title: Technician post

Reservation for Blind and Low vision – 1

Qualification : SSLC with ITI

Last date for apply – 21.4.2018

For more details please visit: [www.fri.res.in](http://www.fri.res.in)

**7. Recruitment for Atomic Energy Education Society for its different parts of India**

Job title: Mathematics physics post

Total post: 7

Reservation for Blind and Low vision – 1

Last date for apply – 7.4.2018

For more details please visit: [www.aces.gov.in](http://www.aces.gov.in)

**8. Job opportunity for V.I. at Indian Association for the Blind at Madhurai, Chennai & Bangalore**

Indian Association for the Blind (IAB), based in Madurai, established in 1985 by visually challenged activist Late Mr.S.M.A Jinnah and a group of like-minded visually challenged people with a vision to empower the visually challenged become self-reliant by providing comprehensive education, employment and rehabilitation opportunities.

Indian Association for the Blind offers pre employment training followed by placements in various sectors such as BPO, Quality control and Food & retail exclusively for visually challenged, Physically Challenged and Hearing Impaired to improve their quality of life and make them self reliant. We train graduates and under graduates on fundamentals of computer using Jaws, handling voice calls, Quality Control and other soft skills which enhance their technical knowledge and skills. Training will be based on candidate's skill set. It would be grateful if your good office would help us in announcing our training and Employment activities and join hands with IAB in making differently abled community aware of the available job opportunities.

This training programme is completely free with stipend for differently abled persons only.  Food will be provided at free of cost. We have branches in Madurai, Chennai & Bengaluru.

Please find below the job requirements. Kindly revert back for any doubts.

**1. Associate - Customer Sales Support**

Candidate Should be enthusiastic with Good Tamil & Basic English speaking (or) Good Kannada  & Basic English speaking skill

Should have good listening, Problem solving skills & Interested in telesales

Looking for only Visually Challenged & Physically Challenged candidates

Qualification : SSLC, HSC Or Any Degree

Both Male & Female

Age : Upto 35

Location: Madurai,Chennai & Bangalore

Training will be provided at free of cost

Salary : 6K to 8K

Candidates have to arrange for accommodation by their own

2. **Quality Checking (Rubber Valves)**

Looking for only Visually Challenged, Physically Challenged & Hearing Impaired candidates

Qualification : 8th Pass

Location : Madurai

Both Male & Female

Salary : 6K to 10K

Age : 35 to 40

Training will be provided at free of cost

**Please contact Antony Helenraj (****antony@enableindia.org** **or 8792467604) if you have suitable VI candidates for this opportunity**