**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

#S-372, Bharathnagar 2nd Phase, Near Karnataka Bank, Magadi Main road, Bangalore-560091

Ph: 080-23484794,

Email ID: nfbkarnataka@gmail.com

website: [www.nfbkarnataka.org](http://www.nfbkarnataka.org)

61st issue

Period from 16st to 31st January 2018

Table of Content

**1. Editorial**

**2 . News from far & near**

# 1. United Nations released Sustainable Development Goals in Braille

# 2. National Games for Visually Impaired were a huge success

# 3. Special group on disabled people will help design smart cities

# 4. Louis braille birthday celebration in Mysuru

5. Higher education for students with disabilities is challenging

6. HC orders visually impaired students to move to DDA accommodations

# 7. Bombay HC orders state to give details of money spent on people with disabilities

# 8. Get cracking on implementing new disability law: Union minister Gehlot to all States

# 9. Taking care of your eyes is vital

# 10. Amazon rolls out a delivery station exclusively for the deaf

11. Centre starts initiative to make 100 websites disabled friendly

# 12. This blind triathlete is inspiring others to aim for gold

13. First National Congress for Persons with Disabilities

14. Adventure sport event held in Bangalore for disabled people

# 15. Dance & Music Festival for artistes with disabilities in Delhi

# 16. Leading cause of disability in India is stroke

17. Disabled defense officials take part in Mumbai marathon

18. Nepal government may partially lift restrictions on disabled from climbing Mt Everest

# 19. Union Minister slams states for poor implementation of job quota for disabled

# 20. New app will enable disabled in this Tamil Nadu district to apply for benefits easily

21. People with disabilities to be addressed as ‘divyangs’ on railways concession certificate

# 22. Jormal Periwal Memorial Senior Secondary School for the Blind are national kabaddi champs!

# 23. Thane Railway Police arrest 4 people for misuse of public toilet for disabled

# 24. Swarga 2018 calendar featuring disabled achievers

# 25. Paralympian Deepa Malik gets prestigious ‘First Ladies‘ Award

# 26. Conference on accessible tourism for disabled to be held in Nepal

# 27. Blind Face book employee is developing tech that help vision impaired use the site

# 28. Blind lead the way at this unique car rally in Gurgaon

# 29. India's victorious blind cricket team on top of the world, literally!

30. For board exams, CBSE puts Type-1 diabetes under disabled category

# 31. Disabled forum sue oil companies for not following RPWD 2016 provisions

# 32. A video system that could be a game changer for the blind

# 33. Victorious Indian blind cricket team meets Home Minister Rajnath Singh

# 34. Blind programmers are an example of inclusion

35. Government tells TV channels to carry President's Republic Day speech in sign language

# 36. Tamil Nadu Para Sports State Championships start on Republic Day

# 37. Acute indifference towards para athletes at annual sports event in Tiruchi

# 38. Wheelchair users go scuba diving in Puducherry!

39. Disabled Dhanbad girl makes it to East Zone cricket team

# 40. Band of 28 blind students in Republic Day parade

# 41. Portable ramp makes train travel easier for the disabled

# 42. Paralympian Matt Formston gives lessons in surfing to blind children in Australia

43. Delhi High Court orders action against illegal parking outside blind school

44. Most establishments in Aurangabad not disabled friendly: Study

# 45. Class 10 student tops Tamil Nadu in Braille reading & writing competitions

# 46. From education to infrastructure, Pune civic authorities announce steps to make city disabled friendly

# 47. This artist will hold her exhibition in total darkness so others experience the world of the blind

# 48. Smart device gives Hong Kong's disabled & elderly more time to cross busy roads

# 49. Kolkata's first inclusive meet up gives city's disabled an opportunity to connect

# 50. Young Pakistani student creates navigation device for the blind

51. Disabled students at a Mumbai school made to sit near a toilet

# 52. Special educators in Telangana demand pay on par with other teachers in the state

# 53. Audit reveals Aurangabad is not disabled friendly

54. Persons with disability to get free coaching for banking and competitive exams

# 55. Blind 85-year-old professor thrills with her moves on the slopes

# 56. Fashion Competition for hearing impaired held in Chandigarh

57. City’s rly station fails to be disabled-friendly

58. 2 children with disabilities face an uncertain future

# 59. Meet the man behind India's 1st cricket tournament for the blind

# 60. Police apathy killed our son, says family of disabled man

# 61. Disabled groups gather in Kerala capital to raise various demands

# 62. Odisha Blind Association wants increase in monthly pension for visually impaired

# 63. Get set for a wheelchair cricket tournament in February in Bengaluru!

# 64. More awareness on disabled sportspersons to be created in schools

65. Radio Udaan convention and Udaan Idol finale 2017-18

# 2. NFB Desk

1. Celebration of World Braille day on 4th January 2018

2. Five days CRE training workshop for Special Educators

3. Initiative of Advocacy by NFB Karnataka

3. Announcement

1. ORDI- Walk / Run activity to show support for the cause and spread awareness on 25th February 2018

2. Online sessions on creation and editing of EPUB by Prashant

3. Disability NGO Alliance (DNA) based on Bangalore is pleased in introducing a new initiative called “Abhyudaya” – A new initiative

4. Information

1. Free hostel facilities for old age brothers and sisters at Siliguri

2. Notification of the central government for reservation in jobs to persons with bench mark disability in conformity right to persons with disability act 2016

5. Employment

1. ASIA'S BIGGEST EXCLUSIVE JOB FAIR FOR DIFFERENTLY ABLED

2. Short term training program for persons with disability under Pradanmantri koushal vikas yojana (PMKVY)

# News

# 1. United Nations released Sustainable Development Goals in Braille

As part of its vision of leaving no one behind, the United Nations organisation has unveiled the Braille Version of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals - SDGs.

The UN has the set the target for including every one in its future projects and the Agenda 2030.

The Sustainable Development Goals in Braille has been made possible by the United Nations Information Centre Nigeria.

The braille version was released at the closing ceremony of the One-Week Braille Celebration in Abeokuta, Ogun State on 11 January.

**The initiative was taken to ensure that every one is able to understand the development work proposed by the United Nations, even those with visual impairments.**

The United Nations representatives said that inclusiveness is a target set by the UN to make the world barrier free for people irrespective of their physical limitations.

# 2. National Games for Visually Impaired were a huge success

The three-day long National Games for Visually Impaired ended in Ludhiana on Monday.

The games had been organised by the state unit of the National Federation for Blind at the Guru Nanak Stadium.

**More than 300 visually impaired people took part in the huge event. They had come from different parts of the country accompanied by their guardians.**

There were many participants from far of states such as, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Assam.

Around 114 track and field events were held during the National Games.

###### Cooperation from various organisations and departments made the event a success

Meals and track suits for the visiting participants were provided by local NGOs Swami Shankranand Bhoori Wale and Sarbat Da Bhala Charitable Trust.

The accommodations for the participants were taken care of by the Vocational Rehabilitation and Training Centre for Blind.

The district administration of Ludhiana had made transportation arrangements.

Moreover, the Punjab Sports Department allowed the organisers to use the stadium free of cost, besides providing its coaches and other staff to assist them in conducting the games.

The efforts of so many organisations and people involved in the games made it a huge success.

# 3. Special group on disabled people will help design smart cities

The Union housing and urban affairs ministry is planning to create special groups to focus on the needs of people with disabilities.

These groups will be useful in collecting data which will be used while designing the smart city projects of the government.

Housing and urban affairs minister Hardeep Puri has said that the specialized groups will be based on people with disabilities, women and young professionals.

The feedback of these people will help in designing of smart cities that can meet the requirements of people from all walks of life.

The groups will have ordinary people, experts and also agencies and organisations that are working for the welfare of the people with disabilities, women and the youth.

The group for disabled people fill focus on the problems and challenges faced by people with disabilities and also come with the solutions to the issues.

This will help make the smart cities accessible and disabled friendly.

# 4. Louis braille birthday celebration in Mysuru

**On the occasion of the 209th Birthday of Louis braille, events and activities will be organized in Mysore.**

The events will be organised by the Louis braille seva pratishthan in Mysuru that is working for the welfare of visually impaired people in the region.

As per reports, state level competitions and cultural events will be organized on 27 January and 28 January at the Nanjaraja Bahadur auditorium.

Louis Braille was a French educator and is the inventor of the braille system that allows the blind or visually impaired to read or write and is simply called braille.

The tactile system has been in use without much change ever since he developed it in the 1820s.

The braille has been empowering the people with visual impairments for decades

**5. Higher education for students with disabilities is challenging**

Surekha Pawar is a visually impaired student at the University of Mumbai. She is pursuing her masters in politics from MU and travels daily from her hostel in Mulund to the Kalina campus of the university.

This journey is definitely not an easy one for a blind person. Surekha has to change buses and trains to reach her destination and come back every day and that is a huge challenge.

However, these difficulties are a small price that disabled students are willing to pay for the dream of higher education.

Travelling also is not the only issue.

These students face the hurdles in the campus as well due to the lack of accessibility features and facilities.

Even the lessons are a challenge as the medium of education does not always come in a disabled friendly format.

Visually impaired students struggle to find writers when it is exam time.

Despite the passing of disabled focused laws and rulings, there is a long way to go when it comes to making higher education an easy option for disabled people in India.

**Implementation of reservations for disabled students in educational institutions is not being done as expected and that hampers the employment opportunities for them.**

Although technology is making some changes in the lives of students, a lot still needs to be done.

**6. HC orders visually impaired students to move to DDA accommodations**

The Delhi High Court today has ordered visually impaired students living in tents to shift to the alternate facilities provided to them by the DDA.

The students were living on the land where hostel was recently demolished and refusing to move to the accommodations provided by the Delhi Development Authority -DDA.

The court had heard about the situation of the blind students when they were rendered without a roof over their heads, and intervened.

The court advised the students to take the benefit of the help being offered to them by the DDA and vacate the land.

The hostel was demolished by the authorities as it was built in an illegal manner.

# 7. Bombay HC orders state to give details of money spent on people with disabilities

The Bombay high court has ordered the Maharashtra state government to give the details of the money spend on the welfare of people with disabilities.

The court has asked for a detailed corporation wise information from the state.

The order was given by the court in response to a plea regarding the misuse of funds for disabled people by various departments of the government.

The petitioner had claimed in court that local bodies which included civic corporations, zilla parishads and gram panchayat were misusing the funds reserved for the welfare of disabled people.

As per law there is a provision that local bodies need to use three per cent of the budget for the disabled people in their respective regions and areas.

As per the petitioner the required amount was not spend on disabled people as per the Maharashtra state welfare scheme for persons with disabilities.

The court has asked for the details to be submitted within two weeks.

# 8. Get cracking on implementing new disability law: Union minister Gehlot to all States

The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot has urged all the states to ensure that the new law on disability is implemented effectively. The new law aims to create a barrier-free environment for the disabled, in line with the Accessible India campaign.

## Union Minister writes a letter to all chief ministers

In a letter sent to chief ministers of all states and union territories, Gehlot has told them to work in a committed way to meet the targets of the campaign, which was launched by Prime Minister Modi in 2015.

He said that the RPWD 2016 Act had expanded the horizon when it comes to the rights of the disabled. It has also placed more responsibility on the government authorities to ensure that the disabled enjoy the same rights as others.

In his letter, he said the chief ministers must meet the targets on a fast-track basis.

“I shall be grateful if you arrange to issue instructions to all the relevant departments to ensure the effective implementation of the provisions of the RPwD Act, 2016 and take steps for creating a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities on a fast-track basis, in line with the targets of the Accessible India campaign" - Thawarchand Gehlot, Union Social Justice & Empowerment Minister

Gehlot also mentioned that the Act specifically looks at the creating a barrier-free environment for the disabled when it comes to modes of transportation, information and communication technology systems and other facilities.

### What does RPWD 2016 say?

The Act also provides for a 5% reservation in government and government-aided higher educational institutes and a 4% reservation in government establishments for people with benchmark disabilities. It also directs the states to frame schemes and programmes, within a stipulated time, to promote inclusive education, healthcare, social security, rehabilitation, recreation and sorting activities for the disabled.

# 9. Taking care of your eyes is vital

**Eating a healthy diet is a basic requirement for healthy eyes. Here are some more tips to keep your eyes healthier.**

Eating green, leafy vegetables and carrots provide the necessary vitamins for the benefit of eyes.

Get your eyes checked regularly by visiting an eye doctor to keep a track of eyesight health.

Do not overstrain eyes with constant exposure to computers and mobile phones. Take a break after 20 minutes of work and look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

Use good quality eye makeup products. Do not use expired products as they can be extremely dangerous for the eyes.

Use good quality sunglasses when you go out in sunlight for protection of eyes from harmful Ultraviolet rays of the sun.

# 10. Amazon rolls out a delivery station exclusively for the deaf

E commerce giant Amazon has introduced a 'Silent Delivery Station' that will be completely managed by deaf employees. This is an initiative to create more job opportunities for the hearing impaired.

The station has been launched in partnership with Mirakle Couriers, a company in Mumbai that has trained its deaf employees to deliver packages by bus or on foot to the radius of 2-3 kms. They are also trained in sign language.

Amazon says this is part of its effort to create opportunities for individuals to realise their potential and transform their lives. The pilot program was introduced a year and a half back and, after seeing a good result, Amazon decided to roll out a dedicated delivery station for the deaf.

Mirakle Couriers hopes this will set an example for many in India to support the disabled by giving them relevant opportunities and improve their livelihood.

**11. Centre starts initiative to make 100 websites disabled friendly**

To empower the disabled in India, 100 websites of various state governments and union territories under the Accessible India Campaign were launched by the Union Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment Thaawarchand Gehlot. This was on the occasion of ‘National Conference on Improving Accessibility’.

## Conference held to sensitise different organisations, including state government officials

Accessible websites are those in which the disabled can perceive, understand, navigate, and interact with the Web, and can also contribute to it. A ‘Website Accessibility Project’ under the Accessible India Campaign through ERNET India, which is an independent scientific society under the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY) has been launched to make total 917 websites accessible and providing funds for the same.

A government statement also said that accessible Website Design Principles include providing appropriate alternative text, caption video, transcripts for audio, making all documents accessible and the content is structured, clearly written and easy to read.

The aim of the conference is to make a barrier free environment for the disabled all over the country to enable them to lead a safe and dignified life

# 12. This blind triathlete is inspiring others to aim for gold

When Amy Dixon went into depression after losing her vision five years ago, she pulled herself out of it by going for her first triathlon. Dixon lost 98% of her vision to a rare autoimmune disorder in her 20s and 30s.

Today this accomplished 42-year-old paratriathlete wants to give back to the sport that saved her life. She has started hosting a camp called Camp No Sight No Limits, a four-day skills camp for blind triathletes from around the United States.

Thirteen athletes from places like New York and Florida are taking part this week in workouts, drills and lectures at the Chula Vista Elite Athlete Training Center. There are hundreds of triathlon training camps in the United States but only one that caters to blind athletes. Dixon, who ranked No. 5 in the world in her paratriathlon division, says her camp offers empathy. She says that she has a unique perspective of the challenges blind athletes face when they compete.

**Swimming, cycling and running coaches and sighted guides from around the country are volunteering their time at the camp, which has been largely backed by sponsors.** Dixon’s camp offers practical skills that the athletes, and their guides, can use to plan, organise and solve the problems that blind athletes encounter in the racing world.

## What do blind triathletes do?

Blind triathletes travel the race course with a guide, who swims 750 meters and runs 5 kilometers beside them and also takes the front seat of a tandem bicycle for a 20-kilometer ride. The guides are able to help the blind athletes during the challenging periods of transitioning from wetsuit to running gear. The guide’s job also involves warning the athlete of obstacles, turns and difficult terrain.

# 13. First National Congress for Persons with Disabilities

We invite you to participate in the first Congress for Persons with Disabilities in India. It will be held in Karl Kubel Institute , Annaikatti, Coimbatore.

The Congress will be a social and cultural event with a focus on networking and building cultural and interpersonal relations. It will center on persons with disabilities, their needs, and their roles in the society.

One of the goals is to present disability as a starting point for development of new human skills that today’s world needs so much and to give persons with disabilities an opportunity to play an active role in creating an inclusive society.

The rich conference programme would feature theatrical performances, artistic contributions, lectures, discussions, workshops, sightseeing tours and visits to institutions and NGOs, athletic competitions, an arts and crafts show, and a trade fair for technical rehabilitation tools and social services, and an inclusive flash mob on the streets of Coimbatore.

Do not miss the unique chance to explore the city with many lakes in the foothills of the Western Ghats, in South India.

## Event Details

* Starts on: Thursday, 01 Mar 2018 at 08:00 AM
* Ends on: Sunday, 04 Mar 2018 at 05:00 PM
* City: Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
* Location: KKID Campus, Anaikatti Road
* Event Charges: Paid
* Wheelchair Accessible: Yes
* Sign-Language Interpreter Available: Yes
* [Registration Link](http://nandavanam.co/ncpwd-2018/index.php)

## Organizer Details

* Organizer Name: Nandavanam
* Organizer Phone: 9791823043
* Organizer Email: beautifulmindscongress2018@gmail.com
* Organizer Website: <http://nandavanam.co/ncpwd-2018/index.php>

**14. Adventure sport event held in Bengaluru for disabled people**

# EverydayAbility, is an event organised by Adventure Beyond Barriers Foundations and Firefox Bikes across India.

The event feature people with disabilities taking part in adventurous sports such as wall-climbing, rappelling and slacklining.

The event was held in Bengaluru on Saturday at the Equilibrium Climbing Station, Indiranagar.

Large number of disabled people took part in the event making it a huge success.

People with disabilities including amputees, paraplegics, blind, deaf and people with muscular atrophy were welcomed at the adventure event.

The participants were aged between 14 years to 30 years age group.

The organisers had initially faced the problem of finding a suitable venue in the city as they were looking for a place that was accessible for the disabled people.

The aim of the event was to spread the message that people with disabilities can take up adventure sports and enjoy it like others.

# 15. Dance & Music Festival for artistes with disabilities in Delhi

'Flying Wings – An Integrated Dance & Music Festival’ was organised in New Delhi on Saturday.

The show was unique in every sense and saw the participation of several artistes with disabilities performing dances.

There were Kathak performances by artists with disabilities at the dance and music festival. Aamad Dance Centre, Delhi-based NGO had organised the event at the Kamani Auditorium.

The organisers wanted to promote the feeling of inclusion and also bringing hope, dignity and equality to the people with disabilities.

The first performance was by artistes on wheel chairs, who presented a dance performance on the melodious sufi song ‘Khwaja Mere Khwaja’.

This was followed by a Kathak performance, ‘Natak Sudha’, choreographed by Rani Khanam who is a famous Kathak artiste and founder of Aamad.

# 16. Leading cause of disability in India is stroke

Stroke is a medical condition that causes death and disability in thousands of people across the world. stroke takes place when the flow of blood to the brain is stopped.

This causes the brain cells to go without oxygen resulting in death or disability.

As per data, around 1.5 million cases of stroke occur in the country every year and the numbers have been increasing over the years.

Stroke is a leading cause of disability in the country and urban areas are at higher risk than the rural areas.

As per a study in Bangalore male are more susceptible to stroke as compared to females.

Also the condition is now no more limited to people of older age and more and younger people are now getting strokes.

The study also highlights the impact of various treatment methods used for rehabilitation of stroke patients.

**17. Disabled defence officials take part in Mumbai marathon**

MUMBAI: At least 12 permanently [disabled defence officials](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/disabled-defence-officials) participated in the[Mumbai marathon](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Mumbai-marathon) to sensitise people about the issues concerning the [jawans](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/jawans)and officers like them.

[War Wounded Foundation](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/War-Wounded-Foundation), a New Delhi-based NGO, joined the marathon with its members consisting three officers, one joint commissioned officer and eight jawans - who all became permanently disabled while serving the country in various Army operations.

Lt. Colonel (retd) [Gulshan Kumar](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Gulshan-Kumar), who was one of the members of the group, said, "We want to sensitise citizens of the country about the challenges we face when we return from our service with some disability".

"Compared to the injury, it is the gap in our skills and lack of availability of any training and guidance for rehabilitation which is more serious threat for defence officials with permanent disability. The participation was seen as an attempt to catch the attention of people towards our work," he said.

Kumar said though around 120 former defence officials have been rehabilitated in several corporate sectors, it is not sufficient.

"There is no compiled data with the defence establishments itself," he said.

Referring to today's event, he said, "it was an opportunity for us to talk to people, share our challenges and exchange ideas for making life better".

**18. Nepal government may partially lift restrictions on disabled from climbing Mt Everest**

Nepal's Tourism Minister Jitendra Narayan Dev has hinted that the government may lift the rules that make it difficult for the disabled to clim Mount Everest.

Dev said this to a delegation of organisations that included the National Federation of Disabled Nepal, Independent Living and Blind Rocks. It also included double amputee Hari Budha Magar who lost his legs in an explosion in Afghanistan in 2010 and was training for several months to scale Mt Everest. Magar was forced to postpone his plan of climbing Everest after the government’s ban.

The minister asked these organisations to submit a joint memorandum based on which changes can be made.

On December 28 2017, Nepal passed an amendment banning the double amputees, people without arms and legs, and the blind from attempting to climb the world’s tallest peak. The decision drew strong criticism from many groups.

# 19. Union Minister slams states for poor implementation of job quota for disabled

Union Minister for Social Justice Thawar Chand Gehlot has asked state governments to improve reservation for people with disabilities. Gehlot was in Hyderabad to take stock of the state’s implementation of welfare measures.

## Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh only states to have implemented 6% job quota

The central government increased the percentage of job reservation for disabled from 3% to 6% in the employment sector and up to 5% in education. But many states have not taken proactive measures to implement that.

This is the case even when the population of the disabled has risen from 2.68 crore to 6 crore in the previous year. Gehlot said that states must accept the universal identity cards issued for persons with disabilities by the central government and integrate these cards into welfare schemes.

# 20. New app will enable disabled in this Tamil Nadu district to apply for benefits easily

The Ramanathapuram district unit of the National Informatics Centre (NIC) has launched a user friendly mobile app for the disabled. This is a first of its kind initiative in Tamil Nadu.

## People can download the app by visiting www.ramnad.tn.nic.in

The app has been developed by NIC to reduce the difficulties faced by the disabled so they can get the benefits of the government welfare schemes. They can use their smart mobile phones or visit the nearest Internet centre.

Disabled people who have registered with the DDAWO can get identity cards and benefits under the welfare schemes by applying online after downloading the app.

The app has been developed to apply for the national identity cards and check eligibility criteria and avail benefits under various welfare schemes. The NIC will introduce other features in the coming days.

So far nearly 28,000 disabled people have registered with the DDAWO in the district and they can use the benefits with their mobile phones.

**21. People with disabilities to be addressed as ‘divyangs’ on railways concession certificate**

The people with disabilities will now be referred to as ‘divyangs’ in concession certificate issued by the Indian railways.

The Ministry of Railways has made formal changes in the certificate and instead of ‘viklang’ they will be addressed as ‘divyangs’.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had made the suggestion in 2015 about referring to people with disabilities ‘divyangs’ and it took two years for the railway department to make the change in the travel concession forms that are given to disabled people.

**The ministry has also made other changes such as blind mentioned on the form will be replaced with persons with visual impairment with total absence of sight, deaf and dumb persons with hearing and speech impairment totally and physically-challenged as persons with disabilities (divyang jan).**

The ministry has asked that the order should come into effect from 1 February.

# 22. Jormal Periwal Memorial Senior Secondary School for the Blind are national kabaddi champs!

To the loud cheers of ‘JPM, JPM’, the team from Jormal Periwal Memorial Senior Secondary School for the Blind, outclassed rivals, Vocational Training Centre, to win the Kabaddi Championships title.

## Event held as part of 6-day Usha Sports Championships for the Blind

JPM is one the top schools in India for the blind, that puts special emphasis on both sports and education.That showed in the kabaddi finals of the six-day Usha Sports Championships for the Blind that saw 540 sportspersons competing in powerlifting, judo and kabaddi. JPM beat VTC 104-26 to win the Kabaddi Championships title.

JPM students said that they trained on the mat for the last five months, which gave them the edge. VTC, on the other hand, trained for just a week on the surface. They mostly play on mud courts so they had little practice.

This was the first time that the event was being held on mats. Tram lines were made of taped rope so that the players could know the boundaries. This was also the first time that the teams were given shoes to play on mat. For those used to playing in the mud, this was a little hard to adjust.

### Players were classified according to their level of disability

B-1 players are those who have no light perception in either eye or those who have light perception but are unable to recognise the shape of the hand over a distance or in any direction. B-2 consists of players with partial vision. B-1 players with some light perception were put in blindfolds. The teams were made up of seven B-1 and five B-2 players. The playing seven had to include four B-1 and three B-2.

The players are hoping for a Asian kabaddi tournament sometime in the near future. International There are lans to hold an Asian event that may see participation from Pakistan, Sri Lanka and other Asian teams.

# 23. Thane Railway Police arrest 4 people for misuse of public toilet for disabled

The Thane Government Railway Police have booked a toilet contractor and three other people for alleged misuse of a public toilet meant for the disabled at the Thane railway station. It is reported that the accused allowed people who were not disabled to use the toilet. They have been arrested under The Persons with Disabilities Act, 1995.

A complaint filed by a person from an NGO called Prahar Apang Railway Pravasi Sanghatana saying that the contractor was allowing everyone to use the toilet when it was specifically built for people with disabilities. This was causing problems for the disabled who were finding it difficult to use the toilet meant for them.

Based on that complaint, the police registered an offence under relevant sections of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act.

# 24. Swarga 2018 calendar featuring disabled achievers

Swarga Foundation has released it’s 2018 “I’m Special” Calendar.

This year the calendar features 12 disabled and talented, sportspersons from across the country.

The theme of this year’s calendar is Adaptive Sports.

Swarga calendar was launched in 2016 and has been showcasing disabled people who have faced the challenges and emerged as achievers in their respective fields.

The calendar is aimed to promote the stories of these brave achievers so that others can get inspired and strive for their dreams.

To spread its message of hope and inclusion, Swarga has also created a video to featuring the disabled persons that are a part of the 2018 calendar.

Some of the people featured on the calendar are wheelchair tennis player Prathima Rao from Bengaluru, disabled powerlifter Gulfam Ahmed, Delhi-based thrower Pragya Ghildiyal, Bengaluru’s para-cyclist and marathoner Sagar Baheti, para-badminton & wheelchair basketball player Kartiki Patel from Mumbai, Delhi-based table tennis players Suvarna Raj & Pradeep Raj.

# 25. Paralympian Deepa Malik gets prestigious ‘First Ladies‘ Award

One of India’s top paralympians, Deepa Malik has been given the ‘First Ladies‘Award by the Union Ministry of Women and Child Development.

Deepa Malik was among 100 women from across the country who were honored by the award for following “an unusual path” and succeeding in their respective professions. The awards ceremony took place at the Rashtrapati Bhawan.

Deepa Malik was paralysed when she was 30 years old due to tumors.

After an initial phase of distress, she gathered her strength and decided to face the challenges brought by her disability.

Malik went on to become the first Indian woman to win a medal in the Paralympic Games. She also won a silver medal at the 2016 Summer Paralympics in shot put.

She was awarded the prestigious Padma Shri award from the Indian government in 2017 and Arjuna award in 2012.

# 26. Conference on accessible tourism for disabled to be held in Nepal

A conference on accessible tourism will be held in Nepal's capital, Kathmandu as well the city of Pokhara on 29 March, 2018. This is the first time Nepal is playing host to such a conference.

## Accessible tourism conference to be held in Kathmandu & Pokhara

The conference aims to promote accessible tourism for the disabled who face challenges when it comes to travel, tourism facilities and services. The event will go on for three days and will see over 200 delegates, which will include representatives from various global communities of the disabled groups.

### Conference is being organised by U.S.-based International Development Institute

Accessible tourism is a huge market that is still untapped and Nepal needs the infrastructure to make full use of this. There are over one billion people with disabilities globally. 88% of people with a disability go on for a holiday every year and 50% will travel more if suitable facilities were made available to them at their travel destinations.

# 27. Blind Facebook employee is developing tech that help vision impaired use the site

Matt King is a blind Facebook employee who is developing a technology that will use Artificial Intelligence to put into words the content of an image or video. This will enable the blind to determine appropriate content for people and advertisers.

King is the head of a project that is making solutions for the blind on the platform that could be used to identify images and videos that violate Facebook's terms of use or that advertisers want to avoid.

King was born with a degenerative eye disease called retinitis pigmentosa, and lost his vision by the time he got his degree and started working at IBM on its accessibility projects. He worked on a screen reader to help the blind figure out what was on their screens either through audio cues or a braille device. IBM eventually developed the first screen reader for a graphical interface.

At Facebook, he works on features to help the disabled use the platform, like adding captions to videos or coming up with ways to navigate the site using only audio cues. One of his main projects is automated alt-text which describes audibly what is in Facebook images. Today it is available in over 29 languages on Facebook on the web, iOS and Android.

In December 2017, Facebook pushed an automatic alt-text update that used facial recognition to help visually impaired people find out who is in photos.

# 28. Blind lead the way at this unique car rally in Gurgaon

It was a car rally with a difference as the blind turned navigators and guided drivers with vision through some rough terrain spanning 47 kilometres.

The idea was to send out a message that disability is no barrier to taking up any activity.

While the rally was about raising awareness about the importance of following traffic rules, it also gave the blind an opportunity to overcome their disabilities and showcase their road navigating skills.

The rally covered a range of terrain, from state highways to dirt tracks in villages. The driving gave participants an opportunity to experience and explore the Aravallis and other challenging terrains.

There were participants from Delhi, Noida, Ghaziabad, and Chandigarh. The drivers were not familiar with the route and were totally dependent on their navigators for help with a route map in Braille.

Thirty five cars took part in the rally. The coordination, bonding and team work between the drivers and navigators stood out.

# 29. India's victorious blind cricket team on top of the world, literally!

India’s blind cricket team, which won the World Cup final against Pakistan in Sharjah on Friday, were on the top of the world the next day, literally. They they visited Burj Khalifa, which is the world's tallest tower. The team led by captain Ajay Reddy loved every moment of their visit.

Reddy, who dedicated the win to India's armed forces, said that they had no words to express their joy. This was the team's first outing since they reached Dubai as they had been busy in intense preparation.

The victorious Indian blind team are scheduled to return to India today. The captain and team also got a congratulatory message from India’ chief selector MSK Prasad.

**30. For board exams, CBSE puts Type-1 diabetes under disabled category**

NEW DELHI: Central Board of Secondary Education ([CBSE](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/CBSE)) has clubbed students suffering from [Type-1 diabetes](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Type-1-diabetes) with persons with disabilities (PwD) this year, asking them to fill up the forms for classes X and XII[exams](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/exams) under this category.
Last year, the board allowed insulin-dependent students taking classes X and XII board exams to carry sugar tablets, chocolate, candies and water bottles inside the centre. These "children need frequent meals to avoid hypoglycaemia, which is a danger for life", the CBSE circular had said.

However, diabetic students appearing for the boards have been asked to apply under the physical disability category to avail of these concessions. The exams are commencing from March 5.

Diabetes is not one of the 21 disabilities listed under Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act, 2017. Experts said that while such children were not entitled to a disability certificate, the CBSE move could lead to complications as these students might later seek benefits under the disability act.

While CBSE officials didn't respond to TOI's queries, a Class X student with Type-1 diabetes mellitus (T1DM) said, "The board has said we will be allowed this concession only if we fill up the form under the physical disability category."

The concessions were allowed after Dr Ashok Jhingan, chairperson of Delhi Diabetes Research Centre, had approached CBSE to consider that such patients needed two to four insulin injections every day to maintain their sugar level and were advised not to have a long break between two meals.

Stressing that diabetes is not a disability; the doctor said all they need was special care. "Some of the top athletes such as Olympian Garry Hall have T1DM."

Disability rights activist Dr Satendra Singh said some specific reasonable concessions were needed to help such people. "There is no point of getting a separate certificate for T1DM under the disability category as this will open a Pandora's box as these people will demand benefits under the disability act."

# 31. Disabled forum sue oil companies for not following RPWD 2016 provisions

A group of people with disabilities have moved the High Court of Karnataka against the central government and oil companies for not providing statutory reservation in allotment of LPG distributorships to them.

Notices have been issued to Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum, Hindustan Petroleum and Ministries of Petroleum and Natural Gas and Social Justice and Empowerment

## RPWD 2016 Act provisions not followed, alleges petition

The petitioner said that the Indian Oil Corporation published a notification on 17 August, 2017, for the selection of 238 LPG distributors in various districts. But it did not set aside 5% of the distributorships as mandated under Section 37 of the RPWD 2016, which amounts to 11 distributorships. Instead, it reserved only 6 positions, which is less than even 3%.

The petition also says that no concession in application fee of Rs 10,000 or five lakh security deposits have been granted in favour of the disabled, which also violates the rules. Nor is there a financial assistance in their favour as mandated under Section 19 of the RPWD Act.

The selection of LPG distributorship began on 4 January 4 and ended on 18 January.

# 32. A video system that could be a game changer for the blind

Its a digital device that is worn like a pair of spectacles and is being regarded as having the potential to transform life for blind patients as a low-vision aid. It can allow the legally blind to actually see, be mobile, and independently participate in activities.

Its called eSight system and its a set of electronic glasses that look a lot like the 3D glasses video gamers use. It has a controller so users can magnify an image to great extents.

## Time magazine named eSight system one of 2017's 25 best inventions

Experts say that like other devices, it has an autofocus, but what sets it apart from other devices is that it has bioptic tilt. This tilt allows the user to tip the device up a small amount above their central vision. It also allows retention of the patient’s peripheral vision.

When patients tip the device upwards, the camera system remains focused centrally so the patient can walk around, use the peripheral vision, but quickly glance up to see in detail what is in front of them. The bioptic tilt also helps ensure balance and prevents nausea that might occur with other such technologies.

Experts are calling the system life-changing.

# 33. Victorious Indian blind cricket team meets Home Minister Rajnath Singh

The Indian blind cricket team which won the recent 2018 Blind Cricket World Cup in Sharjah met with the Union Home Minister Shri Rajnath Singh. Singh congratulated the team and hoped they will continue to win such honours for the country.

India beat Pakistan in the final of the 5th Blind Cricket World Cup in Sharjah, to win the title for the second time.

Chasing a huge 308-run target in 40 overs, India won a close encounter in the last but one over. India won the match by two wickets to clinch the trophy.

# 34. Blind programmers are an example of inclusion

A hackathon was held at the International Institute for Information Technology-Bangalore recently.

10 blind students who were a part of I-Stem took part in the hackathon and showcased their programming skills.

The 10 blind students are pursuing BTech in IITs, IIITs and NITs. The group proved that disability is not a barrier and visually impaired people can also learn and create computer programming.

Inclusive Stem (I-Stem) is a group of young people who are blind or visually impaired and are pursuing Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics education and careers.

The group was created by Kartik Sawhney who is a visually impaired MS Computer Science graduate from Stanford University.

The group has been promoting the education and employment of blind while spreading the message of inclusion.

**35. Government tells TV channels to carry President's Republic Day speech in sign language**

The government has told TV channels that they could carry the President’s speech and the Republic Day commentary aired on Doordarshan, which will broadcast them with sign language interpretation for the benefit of the disabled.

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry has said that requests have been received for facilitating access to the disabled to the President’s speech and commentary of the Republic Day ceremony by carrying the telecast with sign language interpretation and English/Hindi captions.

DD Bharati will carry sign language interpretation of the President’s address to the nation from 7 pm to 7:30 PM today. DD News will carry the sign language interpretation of the commentary on the Republic Day parade from 9 am till the end of ceremony) on 26 January.

The feed of DD News and DD Bharati is being made available free. For all the latest India News, download Indian Express App

# 36. Tamil Nadu Para Sports State Championships start on Republic Day

To look for sporting talents among the disabled, a three day para sports championship will be held in Tamil Nadu from 26 January at Madurai. The GMS Foundation and Young Indians are holding this camp.

## Winners may get a chance to represent India in the Paralympics

Those who emerge winners in sports like athletics, powerlifting, shooting and swimming will qualify for the national events to be held later this year. It will also play an important role in deciding who will represent India in the Paralympics.

Eligible participants include those who are physically disabled, have dwarfism and those affected by polio. It also includes youth with spinal cord injuries, cerebral palsy, the blind as well those with mental disabilities. The events will cover a wide range of athletics, powerlifting, shooting and swimming.

# 37. Acute indifference towards para athletes at annual sports event in Tiruchi

Even as India celebrates its blind cricket team's performance at the Blind World Cup, the larger lack of awareness and even indifference towards the disabled was strongly in evidence at an annual sports meet for people with disabilities held at Anna Stadium in Tiruchirapalli this week.

Officials failed to provide even basic facilities like ramps and railings, and with no arrangements in place, it was difficult for participants to reach the sporting arena. Even the highest administrative officer in the district, the Collector, who launched the event was unaware of the lack of facilities.

**Athletes complained that in the absence of ramps, crutches and railings they had to get down from their wheelchairs and literally crawl to the arena to display their talents.** There were wheelchairs available but no one could use them as there were no ramps in the stadium.

Despite the lack of facilities, many of them did well at the events. There was no support staff present to help athletes with wheelchairs either. Yet again, the laws listed under the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act 2016 to equip safety provisions in public places remains only on paper.

Participants from 25 special schools took part in the event. It was made up of events for people with physical disabilities, the blind and the deaf. Participants displayed their skills in sprints, shuttle badminton, table tennis, adapted volleyball, throwball and kabaddi.

# 38. Wheelchair users go scuba diving in Puducherry!

A group of adventure sports enthusiasts got the opportunity to do some some deep sea and scuba diving off the coast of Puducherry. Ten participants all on wheelchairs enrolled and after the initial steps, a few were finally chosen.

All of them were wheelchair users with severe spinal cord or amputation injuries.This was a first-of-its-kind event anywhere in India organised by Adventures Beyond Barriers Foundation, a Pune-based NGO, in partnership with Chandigarh Spinal Rehab. The event was called Dive For Joy and Temple Adventures based in Puducherry were the scuba partners.

**Participants include paraplegics, quadriplegics and amputees from across the country. Prior knowledge of diving and swimming was not required and all the participants were guided by fully certified trainers.**

There were two instructors to every diver. Some of the participants were entering the water after 15 years, while it was the first time for others.

**39. Disabled Dhanbad girl makes it to East Zone cricket team**

JAMSHEDPUR: [Nishtha Kumari](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Nishtha-Kumari), a 13-year-old girl with one arm, is delighting cricket spectators with her impressive bowling and batting at [Keenan Stadium](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Keenan-Stadium) in Steel City. The[Dhanbad](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Dhanbad) girl is currently accompanying the [East zone](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/East-zone)cricket team to the ongoing U-16 zonal cricket tournament for woman under-way at the stadium.
Nishtha, a Class VII student of Delhi Public School Dhanbad, said, "I used to play badminton earlier but due to my disability I was never selected to a team following which I gave up badminton and then gave it a shot in cricket. I have been playing successfully for over one year now."

She added that after watching her seniors play cricket closely she evinced interest to play for the school team. She then approached her sports school teacher so she could try out for the girls' team.

"It was in 2016 when I first got selected for the school team," Nishtha said.

Nishta said her father Nawal Kumar, who is a senior employee at Coal Mines Provident Fund and [Neetu Kumari](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Neetu-Kumari), a house wife, have always inspired her to sincerely pursue whichever field she likes.

"My parents have always advised me to strike a balance between sports and education as studies are also equally important in life," Nishtha added.

Praising her school faculties and classmates for their immense support all through her journey from the school team to the zonal team, the promising cricketer who is a die-hard [Virat Kohli](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Virat-Kohli) fan said she has not set any target per say but wants to play cricket for now.

"I was not part of the playing XI team in the first two matches against North and South zone but looking forward to my selection in the next match," Nishtha, whose ultimate aim is to become an IAS officer, said.

"I love cricket because it helps me to unwind and is also beneficial for physically and mental health," Nishtha, who is a single hand bowler and batsman, earned her praise by the selectors and observers of the tournament, said.

# 40. Band of 28 blind students in Republic Day parade

28 students from the Institute for the Blind in Chandigarh are taking part in the Republic Day function.

The students are part of a band and are to play in the Republic Day parade.

The students will walk together playing instruments in the parade wearing checkered shirts and skirts with red velvet caps.

A special bamboo frame has been made with slots for each child so that they can walk without assistance.

The band consist of 18 girls and 10 boys from Moti Ram Arya School and have been practicing hard for the last two weeks.

The band has existed for almost a decade but this is the first time that the UT education department has invited them to participate in the Republic Day function.

# 41. Portable ramp makes train travel easier for the disabled

For most disabled people in India, public transport is a painful experience. There are no proper ramps, wheelchairs, or lifts and this makes it hard for them to board trains or buses,

Hopefully this will change soon as the first step towards making trains more accessible was made last week when the Guntur-Vikarabad Palnadu Express got a special ramp and wheelchair.

Made by Callidai Motor Works, the ramp is specially designed to fit into the entrance of any coach. The wheelchairs are also made to fit the size of coaches, giving the user the freedom to enter any coach.

This is just one of the many thousands of trains across India but its a step towards making facilities more inclusive. Many other railway divisions like like Salem and Thiruvananthapuram have shown interest in using the portable ramp.

At least one person has been using the ramp everyday since its launch. The ideal situation will be for every station in India to have this facility.

# 42. Paralympian Matt Formston gives lessons in surfing to blind children in Australia

**A group of visually impaired children from the New South Wales, a state on the east coast of Australia, had a life changing experience this week.**

The children were part of a master class where they were taught surfing the waves.

The class was organised by Matt Formston who is a cycling Paralympian and world champion in adaptive surfing's blind category. Vision Australia, a non-profit organisation in Australia was behind the initiative.

The aim of the class was to bring the children together in a group effort and also help them enjoy beyond their comfort level.

**When visually impaired children meet others like themselves, they get more strength to face challenges and also feel less isolated.**

The children were excited to feel the waves and the experience will remain with them for a long time to come.

**43. Delhi High Court orders action against illegal parking outside blind school**

The Delhi High Court has given orders to the authorities to deal with the parking outside a Blind Relief Association building.

The Blind Relief Association had appealed to the court that the illegal parking outside the building on Lal Bahadur Shastri Marg was causing a lot of problems to the visually impaired students that study there.

The court has asked the various departments such as Public Works Department, city traffic police and the New Delhi Municipal Council to provide details of the actions taken in this regard.

The students and other visually impaired people were going through inconvenience as the school is near Oberoi Intercontinental Hotel and labourers working there urinate on the guiding tiles meant for visually impaired.

**44. Most establishments in Aurangabad not disabled friendly: Study**

AURANGABAD: The government and private facilities in the city are grossly unwelcoming to 'divyangs', an accessibility audit has revealed.
The audit was conducted by[Vihang special school](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Vihang-special-school), an organisation working for differently-abled children. They surveyed 11 establishments in the city last year and concluded that 36% of the places were non-accessible to people with disabilities, 45% were semi-accessible, while only 18% were accessible in terms of their external environment.

The survey carried out by students of college of social work at the Dr Babasaheb Marathwada Ambedkar University. They survey was conducted at hospitals, government offices, bus stand, railway station, airport, banks, hotels, etc.

The students rated these establishments on different counts such as alighting facility, internal route, availability of toilet, waiting room and parking space for the disabled people, the signages, height of chairs and counters.

India is one of the signatories of the [United Nations](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/United-Nations) Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which clearly outlines the measures the state should take to ensure access to persons with disabilities on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation and to information and communications.

Vihang project head [Aditi Shardul](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Aditi-Shardul) said the greatest worry of parents of children with disabilities is that what will happen to their children after them. "The parents have to be everywhere with their children because they cannot tread alone in society and at public places and that is why we push for a 'sugamya' (accessible) society," Shardul said.

Swati Ambekar, parent of a disabled child said right from the road and transport facilities to schools and market spaces the disabled people face challenges. "We cannot bring the child on road with the wheelchair. Inaccessibility begins from potholes on the road, divyang unfriendly buses and schools and goes everywhere you can think of," she said, adding that, it is because of lack of accessibility that the disabled children, even if admitted in normal schools, cannot continue their education there.

Considering the results of the survey, the Vihang Special School wrote to the establishments which were non-accessible and semi-accessible, appealing to make their facilities divyang-friendly.

Mayor [Nandkumar Ghodele](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Nandkumar-Ghodele) said he would call a meeting of all the stakeholders and push for making the city divyang-friendly. He said the equipment needed to make the [AMC](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/AMC) office accessible to divyangs has been purchased and the installation will be done in a month's time.

Ghodele has earlier stated that all the city roads will be improved in five to six months.

# 45. Class 10 student tops Tamil Nadu in Braille reading & writing competitions

R. Kavya, a partially-sighted class 10 student of a school in Puthur in Tamil Nadu has done her school proud by standing first in the state in both reading and writing Braille Tamil competitions held in Chennai.

Kavya, who wants to become an Indian Administrative Service, was chosen as the best from around 90 blind students from private and government institutions.

In the Tamil category, the oral skills competition involved a timed reading of a Braille text on tourism, while in the written contest, students were tested on how accurately they were able to do a dictated essay in Braille on the Sithanavasal caves. The exams were also held in English.

Kavya said that knowing Braille helps her to be self-reliant while studying. The 15-year-old loves studying Tamil grammar and calls it her favourite subject in class. She says that she would like all blind children to use Braille effectively we it will help them get ahead in life.

# 46. From education to infrastructure, Pune civic authorities announce steps to make city disabled friendly

The Pune Municipal Corporation has allotted Rs 25.90 crore on various schemes meant to help the disabled in the budget estimate for 2018-19. It also plans to start work to make civic offices more accessible for them and has made a budgetary provision of Rs 10 crore to create basic facilities for disabled people in civic buildings and offices.

* An extra Rs 2.5 crore has been allotted for building disabled-friendly toilets in the city gardens. It will also introduce free bus passes for the physically disable, blind and the deaf.
* To provide the disabled opportunities in self-employment and higher education, financial assistance will also be given. It will also give professional training to the disabled at a cost of Rs 10 lakh.
* The budget estimate also includes a provision of Rs two crore to provide financial assistance to organisations, or parents, taking care of a person with a mental disability above 18 years of age.
* The civic body has allotted Rs 2 crore to provide financial assistance to those suffering from leprosy and those with 100% disability.
* Provision of Rs 20 lakh to provide stationary for disabled students.
* The PMC will also spend Rs 20 lakh to bear the expenses of the 50 disabled children at the Apang Kalyankari Sanstha in Wanowrie.

# 47. This artist will hold her exhibition in total darkness so others experience the world of the blind

Victoria Claire is an artist with a degenerative eye disease that affects her vision completely.

Her art work will be displayed as part of a unique art exhibition in Herne Bay, England.

The exhibition will be called A Sixth Sense and will start from 6 February to 18 February. The exhibition is based on the theme of inclusion and will be held in complete darkness.

Victoria Claire makes sculptures and the visitors will be allowed to feel them in the darkness irrespective of their vision abilities.

The aim is to create understanding and awareness in people who can see about the dark world that the visually impaired live in.

The exhibition visitors will enter a black room in dark, guided by a tactile path and guide rope, and experience six sculptures, each representing a different sense.

# 48. Smart device gives Hong Kong's disabled & elderly more time to cross busy roads

Just one tap of a smart card and senior citizens and the disabled in Hong Kong can get a few more seconds to make their way across Hong Kong’s busy roads.

## By 2034 Hong Kong's elderly will form a third of the city's population

The Transport Department has launched a new smart device at a crossing in North Point on Hong Kong Island under a trial scheme.

The device is attached to a traffic pole. When someone taps it with an Octopus card for the elderly or a Octopus card registered with the Persons with Disabilities Status, the blinking green light will flash for 16 seconds. This is higher than the usual 12 seconds.

A display next to the signal also shows how much time is left for pedestrians at the crossing. Hong Kong’s ageing population is growing and the smart device is part of an initiative to look at how technology can help the elderly cross roads safely.

The locations are generally near facilities that elderly and disabled often visit, such as nursing homes and rehabilitation day care centres. The extra time will vary between three to four seconds depending on the location and the size of the crossing.

# 49. Kolkata's first inclusive meet up gives city's disabled an opportunity to connect

About 40 off people with disabilities came together at a hotel in Kolkata for the city's first inclusive meet up organised by Inclov.

Inclov, which is an organisation that runs a matchmaking mobile app of the same name, regularly organises such events to enable people with disabilities to make friends.

The gathering also included many people, without any physical disability. The programme was emceed by Den Mukherjee, a former radio jockey, who has cerebral palsy.

Launched two years ago, the Inclov app has so far got 30,000 registrations. People are asked to share pictures, names and the extent of the physical challenge to maintain transparency.

# 50. Young Pakistani student creates navigation device for the blind

23-year-old Hifza Jamal is a student from Peshawar in Pakistan and has developed a device that can help the blind to see.

Her device is called Sonic Eye and it helps the blind navigate the world through the medium of sound. The device can sense any solid objects around a blind person and alert them with a loud sound.

This will help the blind become aware of the hurdles in their path and walk with more confidence with the information.

To create the device, Jamal took feedback from eye therapists and the vision impaired to understand their needs.

She is now working on the development of a mobile app that will allow the blind to walk without even having to use the stick.

The app has image processing, face recognition and object detection features, and uses the mobile phone camera to detect obstacles.

**51. Disabled students at a Mumbai school made to sit near a toilet**

In a case of blatant insensitivity, 35 students of a school for children with special needs, whose classes are run on the same location of another school in Borivali in Mumbai, were found sitting on a corridor outside a toilet. This is after the other school's management allegedly stopped cooperating with them.

The association that runs the Divyang School, which is an institute for children with disabilities, said the management of Sister Nivedita International School, where the classes are being run, has stopped the students from using the toilet and the therapy room.

Social Support Foundation, an association of parents of children with special needs, alleged the bigger school is playing politics and is harassing children for their benefit.

They say their children are being harassed for the last two months by the principal of Sister Nivedita International School. The school has even cut off the water connection. Social Support Foundation said it went to the Borivali police station, but the police refused to file a complaint.

According to the parents, they were invited by the management of Sister Nivedita International School to set up a learning facility on their premises for children with special needs. The parents have been disappointed with the treatment given to their children and are considering legal options.

# 52. Special educators in Telangana demand pay on par with other teachers in the state

The Special Educators Forum of Telangana has demanded uniform salaries and equal pay for equal work for special educators who teach disabled students in the state. It’s members say that currently special educators are employed on contractual basis on meagre salaries.

The flagship school education schemes for the disabled students in India are Sarva Siksha Abhiyan and Inclusive Education for Disabled at Secondary Stage (IEDSS).

While the central government provides a dole to children with disability it has not created any special educator posts. The SFI believes that the ministry of labour and employment needs to pursue the matter and recommend to the Human Resource Development ministry a hike in salaries of special educators working for disabled students under SSA and IEDSS schemes in all the states.

The forum has said that not paying equal wages, despite the work being the same, is in violation of Article 14 of the Constitution and amounts to exploitation. They have approached the principal secretary of school education to look into their demands.

# 53. Audit reveals Aurangabad is not disabled friendly

An accessibility audit of the Aurangabad city has revealed lack of facilities for the people with disabilities residing there.

The accessibility audit in the city was done by the Vihang special school. It is an organisation working towards the welfare of children with disabilities.

The auditors checked surveyed 11 places in the city last year and concluded that 36% of the places were not at all disabled friendly.

They also found that 45% of the places were partially accessible for dsiabeld people. Only 18% were accessible in terms of their external environment.

The audit was done at places such as hospitals, government offices, bus stand, railway station, airport, banks, and hotels.

The audit revealed that a lot needs to be done by the government and private sector to make Aurangabad a friendly city for the disabled community particularly children with disabilities.

A present the city lacks the infrastructure that can be called safe and accessible for disabled children.

**54. Persons with disability to get free coaching for banking and competitive exams**

BHUBANESWAR: Encouraged by the success of physically challenged students in Odisha Teachers' Eligibility Test (OTET) who had undertaken [free coaching](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/free-coaching) by Odisha government, the Social Security and Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (SSEPD) will provide free coaching to disabled students for banking and other competitive examinations.
"It is really a matter of pride that all the students who were given free coaching for OTET successfully qualified the test and became eligible for teachers' posts in the state. There are many bright students who are physically challenged with little handholding support they can become successful in their lives. The classes will begin from February," said Mansi Nimbhal, director of SSEPD department.

A three-month coaching module will be developed by the Vocational Rehabilitation Centre for Handicapped (VRCH) for providing required coaching to the physically challenged students. Interested candidates will also be provided with accommodation facilities.

Last year 20 persons with disabilities including five hearing impaired, eight visually challenged and seven orthopedically handicapped from the state qualified Odisha Administrative Services exam setting examples for others.

"It is a very good initiative for bright students who are physically challenged. Many times they have to face financial challenges to avail coaching facilities. With the free coaching they will get one of the major supports for achieving success in their career," said Subrat Dalei, a polio-affected graduate.

According to Census 2011, there are 12 lakh PWDs in the state of whom 53 % belong to the age group of 15 to 59 when they can get skill development training. Recently the state government increased the categories of disabilities from 10 to 21. This will increase the number of persons with disabilities to at least five times of their existing number.

Nimbhal was speaking at a legal aid and empowerment camp organised by the department for senior citizens and persons with disabilities here on Sunday.

# 55. Blind 85-year-old professor thrills with her moves on the slopes

For 85-year-old Gillian Lindt, a retired Columbia University professor, age is nothing more than a number.

Lindt, who lives in the United States but is originally from Scandinavia, has led quite the life.

She suffers from macular degeneration, and is completely blind in one eye and can only occasionally see movement in her other. But that does not stop her from showing her moves on the slopes on skis. She says that when she is on the ski, she glides.

Gillian lost her sight 14 years ago, but thanks to the help of a two-way radio and a special instructor in her ear, she manages the slopes quite well.

# 56. Fashion Competition for hearing impaired held in Chandigarh

Mr & Ms Deaf Fashion Competition was recently took place in Chandigarh for people with hearing impairments. The event was organised by Deafeasy at Deaf and Dumb School at the Lions Club.

It was a unique competition for the deaf people as no such Fashion event has been organised in the region earlier.

The hearing impaired participants came not just from Chandigarh but also from parts of Punjab and the neighboring state of Himachal Pradesh.

More than 25 participants took part in the two categories, married and unmarried.

The Fashion Competition had three rounds. The first round had a ramp walk followed by a round with traditional clothing.

The final round was question and answers round that tested the intelligence of the participants.

The volunteers who took care of the arrangements such as registration, choreography, photography were also hearing impaired.

**57. City’s rly station fails to be disabled-friendly**

Chandigarh: In his last year's budget speech, Union finance minister Arun Jaitley had announced that 500 railway stations across the nation would be made disabled-friendly.
Chandigarh Railway Station was one of the 500 stations that had to adopt the model. However, what is worth acknowledging is that the disabled-friendly model failed to see the light of the day and only exists in documents.

It was announced that the railway stations would have a number of facilities for the disabled commuters.

Among these facilities were: A separate dropping area for the disabled, separate parking space, special disabled-friendly toilets, wheelchairs and ramps for convenient entry and exit, special lower-level ticket counter and a help line number.

A visit to the station revealed that although there were ramps on the entry and exit points; two wheelchairs; lifts and escalators for the disabled, the authorities concerned had failed to accommodate separate dropping zone, parking area, special-disabled toilets, bathrooms, special lower-level ticket counters and a helpline number.

Senior commercial manager Ambala division Parveen Gaur said the parking space for disabled would be allotted soon. The station has washrooms and ticket counters for the disabled people, including other facilities.

Meanwhile, there is a long list of pending projects that was announced for the station.

Two of the major projects for which the authorities have failed to chalk out plans are Information Technology Park in 400 acres of land to manufacture railway signal links and anti-collision devices, and a training centre.

The railway authorities also tried to install entertainment systems for the commuters in one of the Shatabdi trains, which ran from New Delhi to Kalka. However, the project failed as the passengers would often damage the equipment and wiring. The proposal was later withdrawn by the railways.

**58. 2 children with disabilities face an uncertain future**

Pune: The nearly 300 residents of Mhakoshi village near Bhor are worried about two little children — Karthik (8), studying in Class IV, and Kunal (6), a Class II student. Both have severe learning disabilities and are set to lose their only shot at primary education — their school.
The village's primary education centre, which functions only up to Class IV, has figured in the list of institutes facing closure across the state. It has 12 students and the next nearest school is 4km away.

A former student of this school had subsequently attended the neighbouring school and had gone on to score a record 95% in the Class X exams in 2016. Villagers say it's unlikely there will ever be a repeat of this achievement.

A disability of any type can leave one socially and economically stranded here. "Parents of children with learning disabilities seldom send them to schools that are a distance away. They need these schools nearby. If we lose our only school, there's no hope for Karthik and Kunal," says a villager who is on crutches. The two teachers working at Mhakoshi say close proximity to a school will only help the two kids.

"They are, at least, getting an education until Class IV. And that's because the school is next to their homes. They are getting our undivided attention here," says Snehalata Vairagkar, one of the school's two teachers.

When Vairagkar had joined the school 10 years ago, it had 28 students. "But everyone's gone now. Mhakoshi has a population of 350, but most of the younger families have moved to Pune or Mumbai. We grow rice here and the crop takes about four months — families move for the rest of the year," she says.

Kavita Shedge, whose son attends the school, says she will not be able to send the child to the other school. Moreover, she says the children will not be able to immediately adapt to the new syllabus. "Moving to Class V, without a minimum learning level, will make our children feel inferior. They will eventually lose interest and drop out. Is that what the government wants?" she asks.

Similar concerns are worrying the residents of Humbevasti village too. An hour away from Mhakoshi, this village — surrounded by hills — has a school with nine children and two teachers. It's unlikely to survive the summer.

The older children, of mostly cattle-rearers and daily wage workers, say it takes them 30 minutes by foot to reach a school in neighbouring Bandalwadi.

"Humbevasti itself is atop a hill. If we lose our school, the younger children will not be able to walk 45 minutes and then climb uphill on the return journey," says one the students.

One of the parents TOI spoke to described how the terrain changes during the rains. Sumar Humbe has children in Classes II, III and IV. "The road gets flooded. Even the older children have trouble walking the route during heavy showers. Is the government really expecting us to send children aged six or seven through that kind of weather every day? They will have to walk 45 minutes, cross small ponds and carry large schoolbags. Primary education is not supposed to cause distress to children," he says.

# 59. Meet the man behind India's 1st cricket tournament for the blind

At the age of 10 months, he suffered an attack of meningitis and became blind. Yet, today George Abraham is a living example of someone who has made a successful and complete life for himself and is helping other blind people to do the same.

He worked with one of India's top advertising firms for nearly 10 years and is today a social entrepreneur, an inspirational speaker and a communicator.

## Every 5th blind person in the world is an Indian, 25,000 new cases found every year

**As founding chairman of the World Blind Cricket Council, he also conceived and organised the first World Cup for the Blind in 1998.**

Abraham's parents refused to regard his disability as a negative and sent him to a regular school instead of one for blind kids. He believes that every blind person can be a potential resource to society and should be given every opportunity to lead a full life.

Abraham decided to empower India's blind population after a visit to a blind school in 1988 made him realise how miserable the conditions of the blind people living there was.

Eventually he organised the first national cricket tournament for the blind in December 1990. This became an annual feature. In 1996, he set up the World Blind Cricket Council and was its Founding Chairman. In 1998, he conceived and organised the first ever World Cup in New Delhi.

He also set up Score Foundation and Project Eyeway to change the mindset associated with the potential and capabilities of the blind.

Through the radio show Yeh Hai Roshni Ka Karwan he spread the success stories of people who fought every hurdle that came in their way due to vision loss and were able to achieve their dream.

# 60. Police apathy killed our son, says family of disabled man

CHENNAI: A 26-year-old with[learning disabilities](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/learning-disabilities) went missing while travelling to work on January 13. It took eight hours for police to file a first information report and more than 48 hours to identify his body which lay unclaimed in a morgue.
Police reports say M [Praveen Kumar](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Praveen-Kumar) died in a road accident; his parents said it was 'murder' by police apathy. "How will we get closure," asked his mother Vijayalakshmi M. "All we can think of is would our son still be alive if police had taken us seriously and started looking for him early." Vijayalakshmi and Praveen were to board a bus from [TTK Road](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/TTK-Road) to his workplace at [RK Salai](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/RK-Salai). After getting into a bus around 6.30am, she noticed he hadn't got in. She called up the hotel where he worked, and his alma mater Vidyasagar, a school for special children in Kotturpuram.

At least 50 people fanned out to look for him. Vijayalakshmi said she lodged a complaint with the Teynampet police at 8am. The FIR was filed at 5pm.

The next day, at 2.45am, Praveen was mowed down by a vehicle on [Anna Salai](https://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/topic/Anna-Salai). His body lay unidentified in a morgue for two days, even as Vijayalakshmi kept retracing the 20-minute journey to RK Salai. "I imagined what he would have done if he was lost," she said on Monday, leading a candle-light vigil for her son at Valluvar Kottam.

Praveen's body was found 5km from where he went missing. Vijayalakshmi and her husband identified Praveen's body on January 17 at Royapettah hospital. Details appeared in the police's 'missing' section online two days later.

# 61. Disabled groups gather in Kerala capital to raise various demands

Several people with disabilities from across Kerala gathered under the banner of Voice of Disabled outside the Kerala Secretariat in Thiruvananthapuram to raise many demands.

Most of them demanded a hike in welfare pension as they said it had become tough to to get a wheelchair through the schemes of the government and local bodies. Also since the Goods and Services Tax (GST) has raised the costs of assistive devices by of 5 to 18%, they were facing difficulties.

The base model of the wheelchair would earlier cost Rs. 6,000. After GST, this has gone up to Rs 9,000. Because of the wear and tear these models have to be replaced every few years.

Another demand was for an increase in the welfare pension amount of Rs. 1,100 per month given to the disabled. The lack of ramp facilities in a large number of government institutions even after awareness campaigns was another concern.

Another demand was that temporary jobs given to the disabled through the employment exchange be made permanent.

# 62. Odisha Blind Association wants increase in monthly pension for visually impaired

**An association for blind in the state of Odisha has demanded that the monthly pension given to visually impaired people should be increased from Rs 500 to Rs 2,000.**

The Odisha Association for the Blind – OAB has asked the state governmnet to make the raise as Andhra Pradesh and Haryana provide Rs 2,000 every month as pension to visually impaired people.

Odisha Association for the Blind is a private organization in the state and has asked the government to consider the rise in prices and inflation.

OAB has also demanded that more specially trained teachers are needed for the schools for blind as there are not enough teachers posted at present.

**There are 55 schools in Odisha for children with disabilities and these include schools for the visually impaired children as well.**

# 63. Get set for a wheelchair cricket tournament in February in Bengaluru!

Cricket gets a new spin this month in Bengaluru!

A year after introducing wheelchair cricket in Karnataka, the Divyaang Myithri Sports Academy along with wheelchair cricket associations of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab, will organise a national tournament in February.

The academy helps disabled take up sports by providing training, coaches, infrastructure and equipment. Matches of the south zone, which includes teams from Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kanyakumari, will be held on 2 and 3 February. The team selected from each zone will compete in the semi-finals in Delhi.

The matches will be played on a mat pitch and with a leather ball. The league matches will be of 12 overs and the final will be of 20 overs. The academy wants more disabled people to participate in national and international matches.

# 64. More awareness on disabled sportspersons to be created in schools

The central government plans to introduce a chapter on disabled sportspersons from the next academic session as one of the ways to move towards greater inclusion.

This is the first time such an initiative is being started. The chapter will also focus on the opportunities available under various schemes of the government for the disabled.

Athletes like Deepa Malik, who won a medal in the 2016 Paralympic Games, could feature in the chapter. This will be started in all NCERT textbooks. All the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) affiliated schools follow the NCERT curriculum.

A meeting in this regard was held between officials of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, Ministry of Human Resource Development and Sports Authority of India. The chapter could form part of the curriculum from classes 5 to 9, but a final decision hasn't yet been taken.

**65. Radio Udaan convention and Udaan Idol finale 2017-18**

Radio Udaan is a flight of life which flies higher and higher and adding inspiration to many people.

This is its first kind online radio dedicated to the persons with visual disability

The Radio Udaan hosted its forth National Convention and the finale of Udaan Idol on 27th and 28th January at Jatt bhavan, sector VI, Punchkula, Haryana. more than 500 people across India attended this event.

This two day events started on 27th January 2018 with the opening ceremony by former DGP and president of Jatt Bhavan Mr. M.S. Mallik. The special guests for the two day event included Mr. Jasbeer Sandhu (Political personality), Ms. Anju Sandhu (Advocate), Ms. Nandita Hudda (social activist), Mrs. Preethi Monga (founder of silver lings), Ms. Madhusinghal (founder of Mitrajyothi) Mr. Gautam Agarwal (General Secretary NFB Karnataka), Mr. Sanjay Jain (Advocate) and many more who not only attended the two day event but also contributed to the best of their ability to make the event successful.

Ms. Muskan from Himachal Pradesh became the first ever “Udaan Idol”. Her melodious voice filled everyone’s heart with delight and contentment

First runner up and second runner up were Mr. Dheeraj and Ms. Sarika from Maharastra

Ms. Sarika recived Rs. 11,000/- Mr. Dheeraj received Rs. 21,000/- and winner of the event Ms. Muskan received Rs.31,000/- as cash prize

The prizes to the winner distributed by Sri. Ratanlal Khataria (Member of parliament)

The program of the second day was inaugurated by the disability commissioner of Delhi Mr. T.D, Dhariyal.

Mr. Dhariyal also part of the discussion panel on “Sexual abuse and women with disability –where are the solutions?”

A wonderful play was also presented by Radio Udaan team called “Jazba” based on the latest employment issues faced by the persons with disability

The vote of thanks was proposed by the Director of Radio Udaan Mrs. Meenal Singhvi. After the vote of thanks the audience and all the guests enjoyed the game show and cultural programs.

On the behalf of voice of the blind let us wish the team Radio Udaan to fly higher and higher and spread its wings to empower each and every persons with disability.

**4. NFB Desk**

**1. Celebration of World Braille day on 4th January 2018**

January 4, 2018 marks the 209th Birth Anniversary of Louis Braille, the inventor of the embossed reading and writing system for the blind. National Federation of the Blind Karnataka (NFB) a premier national self-help NGO of the blind celebrated world Braille day along with its 13th anniversary in Bangalore on 4th January 2018.

A public function was held on 4th January 2018 at 3.00 PM to mark the grand finale of the celebrations. Which was attended by around two hundred members and well wishers of the federation and its friend organizations. The program was inaugurated by hon’ble housing minister Karnataka Government Sri. M. Krishnappa and chaired by Sri. Siddaraju hon’ble Director department of empowerment for persons with disability and senior citizen government of Karnataka.

Program was also graced by various distinguished personalities from cross section of the society as guest of honor including Dr. P.S. Srinath registrar, Institute for Social and Economic Change Bangalore, Sri. Bipin Ram Agarwal President Karnataka chapter of International Vaishya Federation, Mrs. Sonu Agarwal President Mahila Mandal of Akhila Bharatiya Agarwal Sangatan Karnataka, Sri. S.K. Mittal CEO Narayana Netralaya Bangalore

Awards and felicitations of around Rs. 2,00,000/- (two lakh) was presented at the function to the following:

a) NFB Excellency award in category of best employ, Best self employed entrepreneur, Best sports person and Best Social worker to Sri. Balaji V, Sri. Veeresh P, Mr. Shavad and Sri. Eshwar C respectively.

b) NFB Prathibha Award to the following meritorious students : Mr.Jayappa Guddappa Lambani, Mr.Kareppa Sidliyal, Mr. Bhaskar T, Mr.Nanjundegowda Y.M who secured first position among visually challenged students in SSLC, PUC, Degree and P.G. exam 2017 respectively

c) The presentation of “NFB Dignity of Community Samman” to Sri. Paul Kumar Advocate, Sri. Shekar Naik recipient of Padmashri Award and Mrs. Meenal singvi president of Para Olympic committee Telangana and Director of Radio Udaan

d) The presentation of “NFB Shrest Manav Seva samman” for the dedicated volunteer service of the following volunteers - Mrs. Geetha rammohan (Premanjali trust), Mrs. Akshatha (Amritha bindu scribe providing service), Sri. Shivaji Rao (help the blind foundation), Sri. Satish P and Mrs. Tamilmangai M

e) The distribution of financial assistance to 38 visually impaired men and 20 women of total worth Rs.1,17,000/-

The function was also witness the release by the chief guest of a souvenir and Braille calendar published by the federation. An exhibition of modern assistive devices for the blind was also be organised on the occasion.

All of the above events were held at City Central library, Hampinagar Bust stop, RPC Layout, Vijayanagar Bangalore.

**2. Five days CRE training workshop for Special Educators**

NFB Karnataka conducted a RCI approved CRE 5 days Training workshop for special educators on behalf of National Institute for Empowerment of persons with visual disability Regional Center Chennai under this

Under this training program 30 special educators working under SSA across the state were imparted with training of the innovative and scientific techniques/methods of addressing special needs of children with visual disability.

The workshop was held at the premises of NFB Karnataka from 16th to 20th January 2018

It was inaugurated on 16th January 2018 by Director SSA Mrs. Honnamba

The inauguration session was also graced by some distinguished functionaries of the disability sector including prof. Prasanna Udpikar HOD English Department VVN Degree college Bangalore, Mrs. Vani lakshman key functionary of Matruchaya center

A small valedictory program was also organised on final day of the workshop dated 20th January which was chaired by Mr. Sarvanan program coordinator NIEPVD Chennai. Sri. B.S. Venkatesh Associate professor of Economics Maharani Government college Bangalore, Advocate Mrs. Varsha also graced this occasion.

Certificates of participation were distributed to all 30 participants.

Various topics covered in different business sessions during the 5 days include

1. Need & importance of adapting text books for visually impaired children

2. Principles of adapting text books for children with visual impairment

3. Addressing the Specific problems of Special/Inclusive Teachers in Teaching visually impaired children at Primary & secondary level

4. Orientation to English Braille

5. Orientation to Kannada Braille

6. Instructional Strategies to convert visual ideas into non –visual ideas & Introduction to adaptation of science concepts

7. Preparation Low cost Tactile Learning Material

8. Use and preparation of Tactile Diagrams

9. Training in Braille Reading and Writing (English)

10. Training in Braille Reading and Writing (Kannada)

11. Introduction to adaptation of Mathematical concepts

12. Training in Nemeth code usage

13. Preparing mathematical text book material for VI students at primary level

14. Preparing mathematical text book material for VI students at secondary level

15. Introduction to adaptation of Social Science concepts

16. Preparation of social science text book material for VI students at primary level

17. Preparation of social science text book material for VI students at Secondary level

18. Preparing Language text book material for VI students at primary level

19. Preparing Language text book material for VI students at Secondary level

20. Braille Translation Programmes

21. Orientation of right to persons with disability (RPD) act 2016 with special reference to provisions relating education.

Key resource persons/faculties who dealt with all above mentioned topics in different business sessions included –

1. Prof. Prasanna udpikar HOD

2. Mrs. Sindhu Kannan apthomological rehabilitation officer Narayana netralaya Bangalore

3. Mrs. Vanilakshman Key functionary Matruchaya Braille Resource Center

4. Mr. Mahesh Ranani Chief Librarian National federation of the blind

5. Mr. Hampaiah Braille book project coordinator National federation of the blind

6. Mrs. Satya sheela Teacher at Rangarao memorial school Mysore

7. Mrs. Annapurna Lecturer Hellen Keller Teachers training Institute government of Karnataka Mysore

8. Mr. Basavaraj Senior faculty Sri Ramana Maharshi Accademy for the blind

9. Mrs. Swetha Teacher Jyothiseva school

10. Mrs. Annamma Teacher Jyothi seva School

11. Mrs. Uma Rao Kolar Senior key functionary Matruchaya

12. Mrs. Chandrika Honnappa from Mathruchaya

13. Mr. Ananad from Mitrajyothi

14. Mr. Madhu from Mitrajyothi

15. Mr. L.N.Reddy from Mitrajyothi

16. Advocate Mrs. Varsha

**3. Initiative of Advocacy by NFB Karnataka**

Readers would be happy to know the following initiative taken by the federation with regard to pursuate the state government for effective and expeditious implementation of Right to persons with disability act 2016.

As our readers may recall that NFB Karnataka started long back its move to influence the state government for initiating a comprehensive and time bound action with regard to full and effective implementation of the act in the state.

In this process federation hosted joint meeting of leading NGO representing different disabilities and senior officers of various concerned departments under chairpersonship of Mrs. Umamahadevan principal secretary department of women and child development, government of Karnataka.

In this meeting a common memorandum containing 30 points for comprehensive action to be initiated by the state government for effective implementation of the act was approved and decided to submit to hon’ble Chief Minister Sri. Siddaramaiah for his kind persual.

This meeting was convened on 19th August 2017.

Since then the federation is continue to pursue this memorandum for consideration and action of the state government. As per the decision taken in above meeting the federation submitted the memorandum to hon’ble chief minister and other ministers of various concerned departments.

Keeping the pre budget consultation process and fast approaching general election for the state assembly in view federation has started a fresh drive in order to draw the attention of the policy makers to afforstated 30 pints comprehensive action plan and in this process the federation manage to rise this memorandum to the notice of hon’ble housing minister Sri. Krishnappa, women & Child minister Mrs. Umashree and chief secretary Mrs. Ratnaprabha and succeeded in seeking a positive assurance from all these 3 decision making authorities for consideration of it in forthcoming budget upto the optimum extent.

The comprehensive memorandum which has been raised for common benefit of persons with all disabilities is reproduced below for reference of our readers.

To

Mrs. Umashree

Hon’ble Minister

Department for Women & Child Development &

Empowerment of Disables & Senior citizen

Government of Karnataka

Bangalore

Respected Madam,

**Sub: Common memorandum of people of Karnataka with all 21 specified disabilities**

We write this on behalf of around 25 lakh persons with 21 specified disabilities in the state to invite your kind attention to the fact that the parliament of India has enacted a new and comprehensive legislation titled “Right to persons with Disability Act 2016” to replace the previous “persons with disability act 1995” and the new act has already come into force in term of Gazette notification of Government of India dated 19th April 2017

We therefore take this opportunity to request your honor to kindly initiate necessary action for expeditious and effective implementation of the new act.

The necessary and immediate action includes –

1. Making rules to carry out the various provisions of the act in the state :-

Sec.101 of the said act confers powers to every state government to make necessary rules to carryout various provisions of the act, particularly the subjects mentioned in sub section 2 of sec. 101.

Sec.101 of the act also obligates every state government to make all such rules with in 6 month time from the date of notification of the act that is 19th April 2016 and accordingly the rules of the state should have been notified on or before 18th October 2017. But our state government has already failed to meet this statutory obligation.

The state government has constituted a formal committee comprising of the representatives from various concerned departments and the representative of various organization representing different disabilities to frame the rules.

We would like to urge your good self to ensure that the rules would be framed in conformity with the rules notified by the central government and drafted by many states like Telangana, Tamilnadu, Rajasthan, etc., and in accordance with general understanding of the committee.

1. Kannada translation of the act:- being a central act the original text of the act is in English and Hindi language hence the translation of the act in kannada is quite essential for its understanding by maximum number of people particularly the stake holders of our state. Hence the state government was requested around one year back to translate that into kannada language and for more than last 6 month we have been told that the translation version has been to the translation department for its approval, but there is no further action by the translation department in this matter it seems that the file has been kept in some cold storage.
2. Availability of copies of the act in accessible alternative format. As your honor may be aware that many groups of people with specified disabilities like blind, low vision, deaf blind, slow learners, persons suffering with dyslexia, etc., are unable to read the normal text. We therefore urge your honour to direct the concerned authorities of the state government in order to ensure the availability of adequate number of copies of the RPD act 2016 in fully accessible alternative formats like Braille, large print, audible format, e-text (in EPUB file with unified guidelines)
3. Inclusion of 14 additional categories of disability in availing benefit of various schemes of state government meant for persons with disability : As your honor may be aware that as per schedule to sub sec.(ZC) under sec. 2 of new RPD act, 21 disabilities have been recognized in compare to 7 disabilities specified in previous PWD act 1995 and every appropriate government is duty bound to extend the benefits of all its scheme and programs meant for persons with disability upto all 21 categories of the disabilities. We therefore urge your honor to kindly include additional 14 categories of disability in taking advantage of various schemes of the state government for empowering person with disability. such as scheme of monthly maintenance allowance, scheme of unemployment allowance, scheme of marriage allowance, scheme of reimbursement of tuition and admission fee/charges for academic courses, scheme of job reservation in public employment, various other social security schemes and so on.
4. The review of scheme of free and compulsory pre primary/primary/secondary education to children with all specified disabilities in a appropriate manner (whether normal schools, special schools or home based) conformity with sec.16, 17, 18 and 31 of the act and in reference to a specific representation of the disability sector prepared in consultation and general understanding of various groups relating to different specified disabilities and enclosed here in as annexure-1.

Despite our regular pursuance and follow up the concerned department has not initiated any action in regard with formulation of new scheme for formal education of children with disability in conformity with sec.16, 17, 18 and 31 of the act.

We therefore urge your good slef for your due intervention with ministry of primary and secondary education in order to initiate necessary and time bound action in consultation with various representative organization of and for the persons with various disabilities.

1. The provisions related higher education :- The sec.32 of the act relating to higher education of persons with disability should have been implemented with effect from the running academic session with regard to reserve 5% seat and relaxation of 5 years upper age limit for students with all specified bench mark disabilities in admission in all higher education institutions, owned and aided by the appropriate government and some other issues contained in a specific representation submitted to ministry of higher education, in consultation and general understanding with different organizations representing persons with different disabilities and enclosed here and marked as annexure -02

But the concerned ministry has not so for initiated any action in any matter while more than half running academic year has already passed. We therefore request your good self for your due intervention with ministry of higher education for necessary and time bound action in conformity with the provision of the RPD act.

1. Compliance of sec.37 of the RPD act in regard with allotment of land and houses to persons with disabilities under various schemes and programs: Sec. 37 of the act obligates every state government to ensure the reservation of minimum 5% for persons with bench mark disabilities in distribution of land and houses for different purposes under various schemes and projects of the state government such as Ashraya Scheme, scheme of KAIDB, scheme of BDA and other rural and urban bodies. We therefore urge your good self to kindly ensure the notification of appropriate reservation in by the concerned authorities in conformity with the section 37 of the act in distribution of free or subsidized houses and land under their relevant schemes and programs
2. Enhancement in reservation of fund allocation under all poverty alleviation schemes of the state government from 3% to 5% in term of sec.37 of the act :- Your good self is requested to ensure the enhancement of fund allocation under all poverty alleviation and other developmental schemes from 3% to 5% for persons with disability under sec.37 of the act.
3. Review of Scheme of job reservation: - The existing scheme of the state government of job reservation for persons with disability undertaken by the state government is also required to be reviewed in term of sec.33 & 34 of the act. We therefore urge your honor to kindly ensure review of the scheme of job reservation for which we are in regular follow up with the office of principal secretary DPAR for last many years. But nothing could materialize so for despite all assurances of the principal secretaries of the concerned departments and the chief secretaries during the said period. Comprehensive representation with regard to review the scheme in conformity with the provisions of the central government and various directions of apex court is enclosed for your kind reference and persual and marked as annexure - 03
4. Incentive to the employers in private sector:- we urge your honor to undertake a new scheme in term of sec.35 of the act to extend incentives to those employers of private sector who ensure that atleast 5% of their workforce is composed of persons with benchmark disabilities. The incentives may be in term of concession in various tax, levies, cash award, preference in purchase of products and services by the government.
5. Provision of financial support for skill development and self-employment: - we urge your honor for establishment of a state disabled finance development corporation in line with various other finance corporations owned by the state government like Devraj Urs finance development corporation for backward classes, Dr. Bheem Rao Ambedkar finance development corporation for schedule cast, Maharshi Valmiki development corporation for schedule tribes and state women development corporation for women. In order to extend financial support to persons with specified benchmark disabilities for undertaking income generation activities, self-employment and for pursuing higher education in the country as well as abroad including skill development and professional courses in conformity with sec.19 of the act.
6. New scheme for promotion of self-employment among the persons with disability :- we also urge your honor to undertake a new scheme under sec.19 of the act to support the persons with disability who are willing to be self-employed with the following specific characteristics
7. Loan should be offered to them either at 0% or at a highly concessional/nominal rate.
8. Preference to entrepreneurs with disabilities in purchase of services and products by the government establishments.
9. Exemption or rebate to the disabled entrepreneurs/suppliers in levy of GST by the state government by way of reimbursement.

13. Awareness campaigning: - Sec.39 of the said act obligates every appropriate government to undertake and support a special awareness campaigning and sensitization program containing the rights of persons with disabilities, values of inclusion/ tolerance/empathy/respect for diversity/skills/abilities/potential of persons with disability among the society at large by way of all means of mass media, face to face contacts, conducting workshops, training programs, etc.,

Even hon’ble Chief Minister also announced a scheme of such awareness campaigning with appropriate budgetary allocation in your budget speech of 19th March 2016. But the scheme could not be implemented so far, we therefore urge your honor to kindly ensure such a comprehensive awareness campaigning at different levels across the state in line with sec.39 of the act in partnership with nongovernmental organizations representing different disabilities.

14. Special drives to ensure accessibility of persons with different disabilities:- Sec.40 of the new act obligates every appropriate government to ensure the accessibility of persons with different disabilities to physical environment, transportation, information, communication, and other facilities/services in urban and rural areas. We therefore urge your good self to kindly ensure the launch of a comprehensive scheme of accessibility in accordance with provisions of sec.40, 41, 43, 44, 45 & 46 of the new act and in due consultation with the organizations of and for person with different disability. The Sugamya Bharat Abhiyan of the Central Government may also be referred in this regard.

Review of scheme of Social Security meant for persons with disability

15. The sec.25 of the act obligate every appropriate government to offer the quantum of benefit to persons with disability under all social security schemes minimum atleast 25% higher than the similar schemes applicable to other weaker section of the society.

We therefore urge your honor to kindly review existing schemes meant for empowerment and social security of persons with disability and to ensure that the quantum of benefit to persons with all specified disabilities under all existing schemes be fixed at minimum 25% higher than the benefit available to other weaker section of the society under similar schemes.

Following schemes should particularly be reviewed

a. marriage allowance to couple of disabled and non disabled which is offered at present equallent to Rs.50,000/- in each case. While under similar scheme for marriage of Sc with non Sc the incentive is given at the rate of between Rs.2 lakh to 3,00,000/- in each case.

b. The prize money scheme for meritorious students :- at present under the scheme of prize money for meritorious students with disability the amount offered is ranging between Rs.3000/- to Rs10000/- while under the similar scheme for the students belonging to SC and ST categories the amount is paid between Rs,20,000/- to 35,000/-

16. Enhancement in Monthly amount of maintenance allowance to poor persons with disability:- your honour may be aware that at present the persons with disability are offered a monthly maintenance allowance at the rate of 1200/- per month in case of severe disability and Rs.500/- in case of partial disability and there is no increment to this amount for last 5 years. While under a similar scheme meant for ex-devadasi a monthly amount is being paid at the rate of 1500 per month.

Even in many other states a upward revision in amount of the monthly pension for persons with disability has been made more than one time during this period and several states like Andrapradesh, Haryana, Delhi, Goa, Tamilnadu are offering the pension to their disabled residents between Rs.1500/- to 3,000/- per month. Hence it is strongly urged to enhance the rate of monthly pension for the poorest among the poor persons with disability and minimum amount to offer should not be less than Rs.2000/- per month

Even hon’ble Chief Minister made a promise at the time of a program for distribution of aids and appliances on 15th January 2017 at Vidhanasoudha to increase the pension from Rs.1200 to 2000/- per month with effect from the current financial year

17. Revision of grant in aid scheme for nongovernmental organizations for persons with disability :- Sec. 55 of this act directs the appropriate governments to provide financial assistance to registered institutions/organizations working for persons with disability and engaged in carrying out the schemes and programs for implementation of this act hence the state government needs to review the scheme of grant in aid for the registered institutions for persons with disability, in line with inclusion of various new activities and new institutions for availment of grant in aid. we also take this opportunity to invite your kind attention to the fact that the code of grant in aid under which the special schools are receiving the grant in aid was notified 35 years back in 1982 and there is no revision in amount fixed under various account heads. So this is the demand of the time to review this 35 years old and impractical scheme as per the current inflation rate and newly emerging needs.

18. Review of “Adhara Scheme” for financial assistance to persons with disability to run petty shops in rural areas :- As the maximum amount of financial support under Adhara scheme is Rs.35,000 per beneficiary and that is also available to a restricted number of persons with disability in each district. The maximum ceiling of Amount has not been revised for more than last 10 years hence the amount given at present under the scheme has become irrelevant to run a petty shop and survive with it. We therefore urge your goodself to kindly enhance the ceiling of the requisite amount under the scheme upto Rs.1 lakh and it should be open for availment of benefit by every eligible persons with disability in rural area.

19. Scheme for promotion of sports activities: - sec.30 of the act obligates every appropriate government to ensure effective participation of persons with disability in sports activities and to make due provisions for the inclusion of persons with disability in their schemes and programs for the promotion and development of sports talents.

We therefore urge your honor for your kind intervention with the ministry of sports and youth empowerment in order to undertake a specific scheme to promote the participation of persons with different disability in various sports activities with the following particular features -

a. sports, scholarship, cash incentives, awards and other benefits available to the sports persons, be extended to the inspiring sports persons with disability too.

b. special academy be established or financial aid be extended to some identified NGO for fulltime coaching of various indoors and out door games particularly wrestling, swimming, athletics, cricket, Kabaddi, Foot ball, Table Tennis, Basket Ball and etc.,

c. The same awards /incentives/benefits be granted to the medal winners in Paralympics events as they are given to the winners of the Olympic events by the state government.

20. The special hostels should be opened for disabled students in all prime cities of the state particularly for those who are pursuing higher education in colleges and universities or professional courses in big cities far away from their home, keeping in view their special needs of accessibility and accommodation inline with the hostels for SC/ST students and OBC students.

21. A new scheme should be undertaken to award minimum 25% higher incentive to those students with disability who complete inter and final examination of CA, ICWA, company secretary courses or LLB, LLM, etc., which is given to the SC students under the similar schemes.

22. Resource Center for Students with Disability at Prime state Universities: Your honor is requested to ensure the establishment of resource centers for empowerment of students with disability and in order to address their special needs at all prime universities of the state inline with Bangalore university, the prime university may include, Mysore University, Karnataka University Dharwad, Gulbarga University, Kuvempu University Shimogga, Women University Bijapur, Rani channamma University Belgaum, etc, in consultation with concerned department/ministries,

23. New Schemes for higher education of the students with disability in line with the schemes for students from Minority communities:- Your honor is urged to undertake similar schemes for students with disability for under going abroad for higher education. The minority students are given the incentive of Rs.20 lakh for this purpose hence the amount of incentive to students with disability should be extended upto Rs.25 lakh equallent to 25% higher than the minority students.

24. A new scheme should also be undertaken to extend fellowship to those students with disability who are pursuing P.hd., and M.Phil in various courses inline with the similar scheme for students belonging to minority communities, SC/ST

25. Special schemes for protection and promotion of rights of women with disability and their socio economic empowerment

Your honor is requested to undertake an exclusive scheme for multidimensional empowerment for women with disability including the following features

1. To undertake or cause to be under taken inclusive or exclusive training of marshal arts and other self-defence techniques , mobility/orientation , personnel grooming, home management, etc.,
2. Marriage incentive and mother hood allowance to women with disability
3. To undertake or cause to be undertaken the inclusive or exclusive professional and vocational trainings for women with disability to ensure their economic independence
4. Establishment of exclusive help lines to support the women with disability and their families in availment of required counseling, guidance, protection, legal aid, special concession, facilities and services meant for them, etc.
5. provision of extra maternity leave than non disabled women, flexible working hours, care taker allowance for the babies of government women employ with disability
6. Special provisions for protection, rescue and compensation for women and girl with disability in case of all forms of exploitation, abuse, violence, including physical, mental, sexual and emotional at home, work place, learning institutions, travel , shelter homes, etc

Miscellaneous

26. Establishment of institutional structure and allocation of adequate budget to carryout all provisions of the act:- Your honor is urge to ensure the time bound action with regard to establish the institutional structure and to allocate sufficient budget to carry out various provisions of the act. The institutional structure include the formation of state advisory board, district advisory board, appointment of state commissioner, constitution of advisory committee to the commissioner, formation of state and district committee for research on disability, assessment board for higher support need, designation of special courts.

27. Special Scheme for protection and promotion of concerns of severely disabled persons with high support need:- Your honor is requested to undertake some specific schemes for the welfare of persons with needy identified disabilities and those who need high support.

28. To initiate a fresh survey of person with all specified disabilities particularly the newly recognized disabilities including all their demographic details:- Your honor is also requested to plan out a fresh state wide survey of persons with all specified disabilities including their socio economic and demographic status.

We take this opportunity to approach your good self with the request to kindly take a serious note of all afforstated solutions of various hardships faced by persons with different specified disability of the state and ensure appropriate and time bound action in order to address all the matters.

With thanks and regards

Gautam Agarwal

General Secretary

National Federation of the Blind Karnataka

**Announcement**

**1. ORDI- Walk / Run activity to show support for the cause and spread awareness on 25th February 2018**

ORDI (Organization for Rare Disease India) is  DNA member organization, which provides support for patients suffering from Rare Diseases with diagnosis, treatment and counseling services. ORDI has collaborated with Indira Gandhi Institute of child Health. ORDI has launched the first rare disease helpline to provide information and advice to patients with rare diseases needing medical or medical assistance.

In regard of this , they are organizing an awareness walking/running event on **25 Feb 2018 (Sunday).**The objective of the event is to increase awareness among common people, medical professionals and pharma companies, we also would like to send our messages to the govt and decision maker so that appropriate support would be provided for the patients with rare disorder about rare disease and challenges faced by patients and rare disease community.

In this year around 5000 would assemble and like to engage in 7 km walk / Run activity to show support for the cause and spread awareness.

Venue: St. Joseph Ground to Cubbon park

Time:7 AM

We request your sponsorship in participation.

Please find the attached Race for 7 2018 presentation.

**2. Online sessions on creation and editing of EPUB by Prashant**

We would like to draw the attention of those readers who are creating books in EPUB 3 format.

Mr. Prashanth Varma is planning to conduct online sessions over skype for those persons from DFI member organizations who are engaged in creation of EPUB files in  EPUB 3 format. This online training program is targeted at introducing new ways of creating the EPUB files, understanding its file set, metadata, validation, fixing errors and at improving quality.

you may nominate your technical staff to participate in this series. Typically, the sessions will be of 1 to 2 hours duration and will be conducted using Skype and if needed screen sharing. At this time Mr. Prashanth has initial planning to conduct 3 such sessions.

Please note that these sessions are not for those who want to learn about the DAISY format.  Some familiarity to EPUB format and its reading tools is essential for participating in this program. Basics of EPUB or accessible formats will not be covered in this series.

Please ask your technical staff to get in touch with Mr. Prashanth on his email. All DFI members may contact Mr. prashanth if interested.

All that is needed to participate is a Windows computer and good internet connection. The session time will be fixed as per mutual convenience.

Mail ID for communication is prashant.rv@gmail.com

**3. Disability NGO Alliance (DNA) based on Bangalore is pleased in introducing a new initiative called “Abhyudaya” – A new initiative**

DNA is happy to introduce its new initiative “**Abhyudaya**” in support of capacity building of its member organizations. The objectives of this program are: To support member organizations to comply with CSR/Government/Donor Requirements and to support member organizations to apply for grants and enhance their networking and collaboration.

For the implementation of this new initiative, the DNA seeks your support and it is also necessary to understand priorities based on your need. Interested DNA members may approach to it for their needs at 7349377793 (Mrs.Jyothi) / jyothi@dna-india.org

**Information**

**1. Free hostel facilities for old age brothers and sisters at Siliguri**

Turnstone Global is going to open one of it's kind old age home for the visually challenged in Siliguri with star facilities. If you know any old visually challenged person who is languishing at home and have
no one to look after please refer to the above mentioned agency. It is absolutely free. Hope our
old visually challenged brothers and sisters will take advantage of the infrastructures.

for more information Dr. Kanchan Gaba Secretary Turnstone Global may be contacted at 09831042144
Secretary
Turnstone Global
09831042144

**2. Notification of the central government for reservation in jobs to persons with bench mark disability in conformity right to persons with disability act 2016**

With enactment of `The Rights of persons with Disabilities Act, 2016’ from 19th April, 2017 and notification of `The Rights of persons with Disabilities Rules, 2017’ on 15th June, 2017, necessary instructions have been notified by the department of Personnel and Training under ministry of personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions regarding reservation for persons with Benchmark Disabilities, as defined under section 2 (r) of the Act against the posts and services of the Central Government.

In term of afforstated notification wide No. 36035/02/2017 dated 15th January 2018, In case of direct recruitment, four percent of the total number of vacancies to be filled up by direct recruitment in the cadre strength in each group of posts i.e. Groups A, B and C shall be reserved for persons with benchmark disabilities. Against the posts identified for each disabilities, of which, one percent each shall be reserved for persons with benchmark disabilities under clause (a), (b) and (c) and one percent, under clause (d) and (e), unless otherwise excluded under the provisions of Para 3 herein under:

(a) blindness and low vision:

(b) deaf and hard of hearing ;

(c) locomotor disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy;

(d) autism, intellectual disability, specific learning disability and mental illness;

(e) multiple disabilities from amongst persons under clauses (a) to (d) including deaf-blindness

The copy of this circular containing all rules and instructions for effective implementation of the scheme of job reservation, may be obtained from the website of above mentioned union ministry or from NFB Karnataka on request.

**Employment**

**1. ASIA'S BIGGEST EXCLUSIVE JOB FAIR FOR DIFFERENTLY ABLED**

(FOR ORTHOPAEDICALLY, VISUALLY & HEARING & SPEECH IMPAIRED)

“We are you Voice” is organize a Asia’s biggest job fair for persons with disability including Orthopaedically, Visual and Hearing & Speech Impaired.

Venue: LOYOLA COLLEGE, CHENNAI, 81/11

Date: 25.2.2018

Only ITI, Diplomo or Graduates with disability are eligible to participate in the fair.

Participation in fair is absolutely free of charge for both job seekers and employers

for registration and more details please contact at 955-150-0061, 812-200-0228

 Contact E-mail: weareyourvoice2017@gmail.com

**2. Short term training program for persons with disability under Pradanmantri koushal vikas yojana (PMKVY)**

Delhi based NGO Navjyothi is going to conduct a short term training program under PMKVY at Gurgaon Haryana.

The persons with disability including blind, low vision, hearing impaired and locomotor disables are eligible to undergo this training.

Duration -2 to 3 months

Fees/charge: No fees

•Fields of Training —

1. Domestic Data Entry Operator

2. CRM domestic non-voice

3. Retail Sales Associate

•Additional subjects taught— Life Skills &  Basic English.

• Hostel accommodation and  Food facility can be provided without any charges during training period. Travelling allowance may be provided depending on circumstances.

•Placement Opportunities will be  facilitated in the sectors of IT-ITES & Retail in the Companies like :

1. Lemon Tree Hotel

2. J.W. Marriot Hotel

3. Hyatt Hotel

4. Genpact

5. Softage

6. Vishal Megamart

7. Big Bazaar

8. Taj Hotel

9. Holiday Inn

10. Reliance Digital and more.

Venue of the training -  Gurugram (Delhi, NCR)

•Educational Eligibility: Min 10th Pass.

• Age limit-- 18-35 years.

•Documents required for enrollment– Disability certificate, Educational certificate , Aadhaar Card & 2 Photo.

Limited Seats.  Last date of registration - 10 February, 2018.