



THE BLIND RELIEF ASSOCIATION, DELHI

80 years of empowering persons with visual disability (1944-2024)



January & February 2025

WORLD BRAILLE DAY



On 4th January, the Blind Relief Association celebrated World Braille Day in honor of Louis Braille's 216th birth anniversary. Held at the Resource & Research Centre, the event featured a range of activities to promote Braille's significance. Highlights included an invocation song by Computer Diploma trainees, a screening of a film on Louis Braille's life, and an inspiring talk by Mr. Kamalbir Singh Jaggi, Head of Academics, Planning & Research on Braille's role in education and empowerment.

Trainees and students paid tribute to Braille's legacy, while a panel comprising experts such as Shri Kamalbir Singh Jaggi, Dr. Abhishek Thakur, Dr. Ramdas Shivhare, Mr. Rajpal, Mr. Deepak Gupta, Mr. Ajay Gupta discussed its contemporary relevance in a lively panel discussion. It is noteworthy to mention that the panelists are all former students of the JPM Senior Secondary School who now hold significant positions.

Besides celebrating the achievements of Braille competition winners, and screening the film Srikanth, the event also introduced newly released Braille books:

1. बुनियादी शिक्षा, लेखक: महात्मा गांधी
2. सोचना, पढ़ना और लिखना (बच्चों के लिए फिलॉसफी) लेखक: सुन्दर सरुक्कई
3. अच्छे विचारों का अकाल (पर्यावरणविद् अनुपम मिश्र के व्याख्यान) लेखक: अनुपम मिश्र
4. शिवपुत्र कथा-कुमार गन्धर्व की जीवनी- लेखक: सोपान जोशी

ANNUAL SPORTS DAY



A two-day annual inclusive sports event was organized at Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education (V.I) on 6-7 January. The participants showed remarkable motivation and sportsmanship despite the harsh weather conditions.

On the first day, the focus was on field and team matches, featuring kabaddi competitions for boys and girls. An inclusive football match and badminton qualifier matches also took place. The second day featured track and field individual matches across various categories.

The event culminated in a reward and recognition ceremony held at the Gandhi Hall auditorium of the Blind Relief Association. The Chairperson Mr. Amitav Virmani, and Executive Secretary Mr. K C. Pande presented certificates and trophies to the winning students.

CRE PROGRAM

A two-day offline Continuing Rehabilitation Education (CRE) program was conducted by Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education on 10-11 January on "Need Assessment of Persons with Visual Impairment."

Under the guidance of Dr. Sudeep Kumar Dubey, Course Director, and Mr. Virender Kumar, Faculty, the interactive sessions, attended by more than 50 participants, provided them with a unique opportunity to gain firsthand insight into the challenges faced by individuals with low vision and

blindness. The highly engaging sessions offered a deeper understanding of the nuances of visual impairment. By combining theoretical knowledge with practical experience, the program created a rich learning environment that was both informative and enjoyable.



ART WORKSHOP

On 24th January, trainees from Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education participated in a workshop led by art educator Mr. Dharmanand. The session explored the potential of art as a medium to support children with special needs, particularly those with visual impairments.

Using minced paper as the primary material, trainees crafted various animals and everyday objects, such as birds, peacocks, and turtles.

This hands-on activity demonstrated how tactile-based learning through sculpture art can enhance sensory and motor skills in children with visual impairments. Through this creative process, children can develop spatial awareness, improve hand coordination, and experience a sense of accomplishment.



CSR DAY



Organized by Youth for Seva, a 50-member team from PwC India spent a day volunteering at the Blind Relief Association on 24th January.

Alongside assisting at the vocational training center, the team participated in a sensitization session led by Mr. David, Deputy Executive Secretary (Operations). The team also engaged with trainees, distributing refreshments and enjoying a music session together.

VISIT TO ARMED FORCES UNIT

On 25th January, students of JPM Senior Secondary School were given the opportunity to visit the Army and Air Force units at Palam to enhance their awareness of the Armed Forces. The visit was facilitated by Col. Pradeep Kapoor, Director of Volunteers for the Blind Foundation.

Around 60 students from Classes IX to XII were transported to and from the units in vehicles provided by the Army. During the visit, they learned about various weapons, ammunition, aircraft, helicopters, and tanks. They also

gained insights into daily life on the battlefield and within the unit through firsthand accounts. The visit concluded with a lunch at the Army unit, which the students thoroughly enjoyed.



DONATION BY OFFLIMITS



The Association is deeply grateful to Gurkirpa Lifestyle company's brand Offlimits for their generous donation of shoes for the school students and trainees.

On 28th January, their team of 18 members visited the Association, sharing inspiring words and handing over the donation of 115 pairs of shoes for both children and adults studying in the Association. This was followed by a discussion with the Association's leadership team, exploring ways to further support our community.

MARTYRS DAY

In paying tribute to Mahatma Gandhi and other martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the nation, the Blind Relief Association hosted a solemn evening gathering for its students, trainees, and staff on 30th January.

Reflecting on the Mahatma's life and values, select trainees from the Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education led the Sarva Dharma Prarthana. Each trainee recited a prayer from a different faith.

Shlok - Sonu | Islam, Jainism - Shuhaib |
Naamala - Nikhil | Sikh - Prabhsimran |

Parsi - Priyanka | Buddhism - Vijaylaxmi | Christian - Alan | Ekdash Varth - Yuvraj



At 5:17 PM, marking the exact moment of Gandhiji's assassination 77 years ago, the gathering observed a moment of silence, paying respects to the revered leader.

PRESENTATION COMPETITION

On 30th January, a presentation competition, the first of its kind, was conducted for trainees enrolled in the Diploma in Computer Education & Assistive Devices program.

A total of 24 trainees participated in the event, divided into five groups. Each group chose a topic of their choice for presentation, allowing them to explore subjects they were passionate about while promoting teamwork and public speaking confidence.

The competition provided a valuable learning experience in creating accessible presentations, enabling trainees to demonstrate their knowledge, develop technical and communication skills, and receive prizes and feedback.



The winning teams were:

1st position: Harsh, Chandan, Shikha, Suraj, and Vishal (Topic: Mahatma Gandhi)

2nd position: Aryan, Ashok, Nikki, Neha, and Manzoor (Topic: Human Generation)

3rd position: Mansi, Ashwani, Himanshu, and Yazir (Topic: Cybersecurity)

Exceptional presenters received tabs and pendrives as gifts.

ANNUAL PICNIC

If there's one day of the year that everyone at the Blind Relief Association eagerly looks forward to and enjoys, it's the Annual Picnic. This year's picnic at Indraprastha Millennium Park on 1st February made for a terrific start to the month and the year. Plenty of walks, music, chats, cricket, dance, and food (of course!) made this day the perfect picnic.



The Association concluded its Annual Picnic at Indraprastha Millennium Park on February 1st with a soulful Sufi and devotional musical evening. The Himalayan Chants group mesmerized the audience, comprising students, trainees, parents, volunteers, and friends of the Blind Relief Association, with their enchanting performances.

FIRST-TIME VOTERS!

For Sita and Jonas, two visually impaired trainees, taking a ride in a 1931 Plymouth passing through the roads of New Delhi was an unforgettable experience. Joined by Mr. Kailash Chandra Pande, Executive Secretary, who was honored as an elderly voter, they were all part of the vintage car rally organized to promote voter awareness.



In preparation for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections, the District Election Office, New Delhi, collaborated with the Heritage Motoring Club of India to organize an inclusive election campaign. On 2nd February, through a unique vintage car drive featuring over 50 vintage cars from Dhyaan Chand National Stadium to New Moti Bagh, the campaign encouraged participation from women, the elderly, disabled persons, and the LGBTQ community.

Some students and trainees from the Blind Relief Association exercised their democratic rights for the first time in the Delhi Assembly elections held on 5th February. The Association appreciates the efforts of the District Election Office, New Delhi in making the polling station accessible to persons with disabilities.

SARASWATI PUJA



On 2nd February, Class X students of JPM Senior Secondary School organized a Vasant Panchami celebration, marking the arrival of spring and honoring Goddess Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom and knowledge.

The event started with Saraswati Puja and Havan, where prayers were offered. Following this, the students showcased musical talent by singing the Saraswati Chalisa through Braille reading. A soulful Raag presentation was performed by Mr. K. C. Pande, Hony. Executive Secretary. The event concluded with bhajans related to Vasant Panchami.

VISIT BY DANKE MEMBERS

A 3-member team from Danke, a non-profit organization in Mie, Japan offering residential support to disabled persons and the elderly visited the Blind Relief Association on 3rd February. Accompanying the team was Nandi Itsuko Sensei a veteran Japanese language teacher who taught Japanese to the students of the Association between 2013-16.

The team comprising Mr. Masato Kubo, Ms. Yuka Oke, and Ms. Riona Kurano was thrilled to meet with Mr. K C Pande, Executive Secretary, and visit the different units of the Association. They were excited to learn about the vocational training programs for adult visually impaired persons. They also enjoyed a foot massage from the new Relaxation Massage Training Center for Visually Impaired Women.

The team met with some students of the Sawaru Nihongo group who are currently learning the Japanese language at the Association. Along with them, the team was delighted to see photographs from the trip some of the Association's students made to Japan in 2016 as part of a Cultural Exchange Mission. Also present was Shuhaib Ali, who was a JPM Class XI student at that time and is now pursuing a B.Ed in Special Education from the Association's Duragbai Deshmukh College of Special Education after completing a Masters in Hindi Literature.



MRS. PRABHJOT MENON'S INSPIRING JOURNEY



When Mrs. Prabhjot Menon first approached the Blind Relief Association in 2015 to contribute to the cause of the visually impaired, little did anyone expect her commitment to span a decade.

Since 2015, Mrs. Menon has been gifting a laptop to the topper of the Diploma in Computer Education (V.I.) in every batch, in memory of her late mother, Mrs. Gurjit Mehta.

This year, Rajender Sahu, the topper of Batch X (2024-25), received a laptop from

Mrs. Menon during her visit on 4th February. Rajender is now employed as an Assistive Technology Trainer with Saksham. On her visit, Mrs. Menon also took the time to hear from the trainees about their experiences and interact with the computer trainers to understand the course's upgrades.

Despite residing in the US, Mrs. Menon makes it a point to visit us every year during her trip to India.

Notably, Mrs. Menon also gifts Orbit devices to the winner of the Braille Reading & Writing Competition in the JPM Senior Secondary School, a tradition she has maintained for two years now, in memory of her late father, Mr. Harbans Singh Mehta.

We thank Mrs. Prabhjot Menon, for keeping her word and consistently contributing to the betterment of visually impaired persons over the past 10 years. We wish her many more years of meaningful association with the Blind Relief Association.

VISIT TO BOOK FAIR

Books are indeed the greatest teachers, guiding individuals forward with wisdom and knowledge. On 7th February 2025, teacher trainees from Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education (V.I.) visited the World Book Fair held in New Delhi

The trainees explored the book fair, expanding their knowledge of new writers and publications. The National Book Trust of India (NBT) warmly welcomed the V.I. trainees and facilitated a special discussion on Braille book publication. NBT officials distributed recently converted Braille books, and the trainees also attended cultural events at the fair.



WELLNESS WORKSHOP



Prabhav Trust, an NGO dedicated to making mental health support accessible and affordable, recently organized a 3-day session on rapport-building at the Blind Relief Association. The sessions, attended by trainees from the Multi-Skill Training, aimed to create an inclusive and engaging environment that fosters connection.

Held on 10th January, 25th January, and 8th February, the sessions included activities like breathing exercises, laughter yoga, sensory exploration, nature walks, and open discussions. Trainees enjoyed the session,

saying it helped them build confidence, express themselves, and form meaningful connections.

LOYAL VOLUNTEERS!

Some individuals leave a lasting impact wherever they go, and Prof. Yoshiro Azuma and Mrs. Sanae Azuma are no exception. Despite moving from Delhi, they remain deeply connected to the Sawaru Nihongo Group (a group comprising visually impaired persons learning the Japanese language), and on their recent visit to Delhi, they joined the class on 9th February.

The session was special, featuring Haiku writing, a group performance of "Yashi no Mi" (Coconut Palm), and a Q&A session. Ramdas Shivhare Sensei, (a peer-teacher) his wife Deepti, and their 5-year-old son also joined, making the gathering even more memorable. A belated wedding celebration for Deepak Gupta Sensei (another peer-teacher) and Sarita added to the joy, with the newlyweds treating everyone to a burger party!



Adding to the day's significance, Mrs. Sanae Azuma brought gifts carefully selected by her and Nishtha Sensei (a former Sawaru Nihongo volunteer-teacher now in Japan) from the Japan Braille Library. These included a children's book entitled *Pekan no ki nobottayo* (Climbed up onto a Pekan tree), plastic erasers for Braille printing, and Japanese Braille calendars.

Their thoughtful gesture shows their dedication—not just to teaching but to the lasting relationships they have built within the community.

#LetsERead

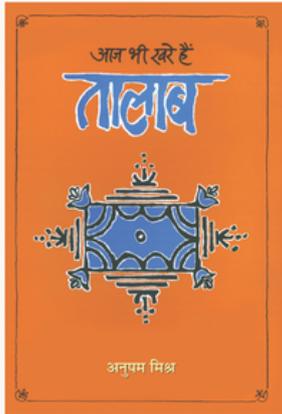
The Blind Relief Association is committed to spreading the power of books to empower persons with visual impairments. As part of its mission, the Association produces audiobooks and e-books in accessible formats to be made available on public platforms like Bookshare and Suganya Pustakalaya, to ensure a wider reach of readers with special needs.

Recently, the Association launched the #LetsERead series! This exciting initiative features accessible titles in e-text format, each accompanied by a brief introduction. 'Aaj Bhi Kare Hain Talab' a widely celebrated book by Anupam Mishra, and 'Buniyadi Shiksha' by Mahatma Gandhi have been announced in the series so far, with more to follow.

#LetsERead



AAJ BHI KHARE HAIN TALAB



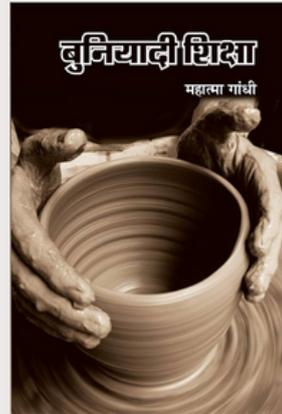
A groundbreaking exploration of India's ancient water systems and a fascinating journey through the history and cultural significance of talabs, or water tanks, that have been the lifeblood of Indian communities for centuries.

Anupam Mishra

#LetsERead



BUNIYADI SHIKSHA



Buniyadi Shiksha (Basic Education) presents Gandhi's *Nai Talim* philosophy, emphasizing learning through work, holistic development, and mother-tongue education. It advocates a skill-based, value-driven approach to foster self-reliance and empower rural communities.

Mahatma Gandhi

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS WORKSHOP



A disaster preparedness drill and workshop was held at the Blind Relief Association on 11th February, focusing on enhancing the readiness of JPM Senior Secondary School to respond to potential disasters.

Members of the GeoHazards Society, Ms. Shivangi, Mr. Hari, and Mr. Pranav Sethi conducted the drill for the students and engaged in a comprehensive discussion on disaster management with the school staff. The meeting, attended by over 25 staff members, focused on addressing various types of disasters that could potentially

affect the school. The discussion outlined effective preparation and response plans to ensure the safety of students, staff, and school property.

VISIT BY NEW DELHI DISTRICT MAGISTRATE

It was an honour and privilege for the Blind Relief Association to receive Shri Sunny Kumar Singh, IAS, District Magistrate of New Delhi, on 12th February who inaugurated the tactile portraits generously donated by the District Election Office, New Delhi.

These portraits have been placed in the working area of the Vocational Training Centre, where they are accessible to the students and trainees of the Association, serving as a valuable source of information.



Besides inaugurating the portraits, Shri Sunny Kumar Singh also toured the Association's training units and appreciated the empowering work that the Association has been doing.

SHG TECH'S DEMO SESSION



SHG Technologies Pvt Ltd conducted a demonstration session introducing their innovative Smart Vision Glass to computer and vocational trainees of the Blind Relief Association, Delhi, on 13th February.

Sagar, a representative from SHG Technologies, demonstrated the glasses' advanced features, including Walking Mode, Things Around Me Mode, Reading Mode, and Face Recognition Mode. The trainees shared valuable feedback and the "Things Around Me" mode stood out as the most appreciated feature.

STATE CULTURAL COMPETITIONS

Alongside academic achievements, our students and trainees also have a deep passion for cultural activities and events, where they consistently excel.

Over the past academic year, JPM Senior Secondary School students have participated in various zonal, district, and state competitions organized by the Directorate of Education, Delhi. In the recently concluded State Cultural Competition, JPM School students won three prestigious prizes:



1. Hindi Extempore: Atul Yadav (Class X) - First Prize
2. Hindi Declamation: Atul Yadav (Class X) - First Prize
3. Qwalli: Third Prize

REPRESENTATIONS AT TATTVA

A panel discussion on "Value-based Education in Contemporary Pedagogy" featured Mr. Kailash Chandra Pande, Executive Secretary of the Blind Relief Association Delhi, as an external expert, and Dr. Abhishek Thakur, Associate Professor at Delhi School of Social Work, who is also a Managing Committee Member and an alumnus of the Blind Relief Association.

Held as a part of TATTVA, an educational conclave (Towards Attaining Truth, Tranquillity, and Values in Action) organized by the Vivekananda Darshanika Samajam in association with the Delhi School of Social Work, the event took place on 15th February at the Institute of Lifelong Learning, University of Delhi.



FOUNDERS DAY



The Blind Relief Association remembered its Founder Shri Umesh Anand Basrurker and his wife Smt. Anusuya Basrurker on Shri Basrurker's 66th death anniversary. The students, trainees, staff, and volunteers gathered on the morning of 19th February to pay homage to and perform a havan in honor of the visionary Basrurkers.

The Association has expanded its services for visually impaired people in numerous ways. However, it represents only a small part of the vast and ambitious vision that Shri Basrurker had originally conceived in 1944. Their legacy lives on through our work.

EDUCATIONAL TOUR

An educational tour to Jodhpur was conducted from 16th to 22nd February 2025 for the teacher trainees of Durgabai Deshmukh College of Special Education (V.I).

The tour commenced with a visit to Navjyoti Special School, where the trainees learned about psychological assessment tests and observed classrooms designed for intellectually and developmentally disabled (IDD) students, along with the sports room, care unit for the elderly, training facilities, and skating classes for IDD students. The group then visited Netrahin Vikas Sansthan, where the faculty demonstrated how the ICT (Information and Communication Technology) center integrates technology into education for visually impaired students. At Navjyoti Educational College, which offers B.Ed. and D.El.Ed. courses, the trainees had the opportunity to learn about teacher education programs and the college's approach to preparing professionals in special education.

On the third day, the group visited Gandhi Mook Badhir Vidyalay, where Administrator Lieutenant Ramesh Gehlot (Retd.) hosted breakfast and provided a tour of the school and its



hostels. The school's expansive infrastructure supports both students and evening college sessions for training teachers of hearing-impaired students.

The Jodhpur educational tour not only enriched the students' academic knowledge but also provided them with practical exposure to real-world applications of special education methodologies.

LAUNCH OF उन्मेष

On 22nd February, the Blind Relief Association, Delhi launched 'उन्मेष' (Unmesh), a platform for showcasing the talents of the students and trainees of the Blind Relief Association, Delhi.

The literal meaning of 'उन्मेष' is 'to bloom', and interestingly the word also echoes the names of our Founders, Shri Umesh & Smt. Anusuya Basrurker. Thus, 'उन्मेष' is in a way a tribute to their memory.



The event, held at the Stilt Area, MBR Block, commenced with a devotional song performed by students from JPM School. Shawad, another talented school student, recited a poem. The audience was then treated to a delightful umbrella dance performed by the school. Gajendra,

an MST trainee captivated the audience with a soulful Ghazal. The performances continued with a contemporary dance performed by Aryan, a student from the Computer Diploma course. The program also featured a poetry recital by Abhilasha from the Computer Course. Prateek Malik from JPM School played the Shakuhachi, a traditional Japanese flute, with an explanation provided by Nikesh. The event concluded with a beautiful song presented by Tumpa from the Massage Section.

The event beautifully showcased diversity by presenting a wide range of performances from participants with various skill sets. This event will be organized frequently to bring out the hidden talents of the trainees and students.

WORKSHOP ON AI

The IT Department of The Blind Relief Association organized a workshop on Artificial Intelligence and Various AI Tools on Saturday, 22nd February 2025. We were honored to have expert speakers, including Mr. Akhilesh Dahiya, Legal Manager at Bank of India, and Mr.



Sourabh Prasad, Software Engineer at Microsoft, who shared their valuable insights.

The workshop focused on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) and technological tools can significantly enhance efficiency and accessibility for the visually impaired. It provided a highly informative and enriching experience, offering expert knowledge and practical insights. The session was a wonderful opportunity to deepen our understanding of AI and explore its applications in improving accessibility and efficiency.

ALUMNUS EARNS DOCTORATE!

Shri Ramdas Shivhare, an alumnus of JPM Senior Secondary School, has achieved a significant academic milestone by earning his doctorate from the University of Delhi on 22nd February.

His Ph.D. thesis, "Tracing Historical Trajectories of Disability Movements in India and Japan (1947-2022)," was completed in the Department of East Asian Studies at the University of Delhi.

Before pursuing his Ph.D., Ramdas earned his Bachelor's and Master's degrees in History. Currently, he serves as an Undersecretary at the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).



LIVELIHOOD KIT DISTRIBUTION CEREMONY



The Blind Relief Association in Delhi hosted a livelihood kit distribution ceremony on 25th February, attended by the HSBC leadership team.

HSBC leaders, including Mr. Ruchan Candar and Mr. Tanmay Vyas, were present. The members toured the campus and underwent a sensitization workshop conducted by Mr. David, Deputy Executive Secretary (Operations).

At the ceremony, seventeen graduated masseurs received relaxation massage kits, and two graduated Multi-Skill trainees received

sewing machines. HSBC mentors donated funds for a cutting table for the sewing section and sponsored refreshments. The event concluded with cultural events and sharing of experiences about the mentorship program.

The Blind Relief Association's 'Saarathi' mentorship program, launched in 2018 in partnership with Youth4Jobs Foundation and HSBC, provides one-on-one mentorship and support to vocational trainees in areas like future skills, interview preparation, and education guidance.

MAHA SHIVRATRI CELEBRATIONS

Maha Shivaratri, an auspicious festival, was observed with great devotion at the Blind Relief Association, Delhi.

The celebrations began early morning on 26th February with a special worship ceremony for Lord Shiva, followed by a special lunch. In the evening, a sacred havan and soulful bhajan session were organized at Gandhi Hall. The event was graced by the Executive Secretary Mr. K.C. Pande and Principal Mr. K J Kuriyan. The celebrations concluded at midnight with continued devotion and enthusiasm.



Catch up on social media

