

A VICTORY ABOVE & BEYOND WORDS!

Kajal Dhawan has hearing impairment and speech problems. But that didn't top her from becoming an 'outstanding' achiever!

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Kajal Dhawan can be called the quintessential 'Female Iqbal'. Like Nagesh Kukunoor's famous protagonist, this 28-year-old has also fought the battles of life — and won — with a steely determination. It's not just the achievements, Kajal shares Iqbal's challenges also. She is 100 per cent hearing impaired, and can speak only very falteringly.

But that has never stood in the way of her achievements. On December 3, she won what she considers her biggest achievement so far: a National Award for outstanding employee from the President of India. (The annual award is given by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment to the physically challenged.) Kajal is an executive with the International Division of Confederation of Indian Industries (CII).

FANTASTIC FAMILY

Kajal owes her success to her parents and siblings. Through her interpreter Richa, she says, "My family has never made me feel that I am different from others. Almost everybody in my family has learnt sign language to be able to interact with me."

Her father, Retd General S.K. Dhawan, says,



Kajal with her father S.K. Dhawan.

"My wife did not take up any job and devoted all her time to Kajal. My daughter is an expert in lip-reading now. We wanted her to grow up without any inhibitions. Kajal has two elder sisters and both of them are doctors. All of us have given her so much love so that she doesn't feel inferior to anyone. We even learnt spellings in sign language. In fact, our daughter is known as a very bubbly and fearless girl."

AN ACHIEVER

Kajal did not attend any special school and completed her senior secondary from Kalkaji Public School. She graduated from Jesus and Mary College with full honours.

College years also saw her excel in sports. Kajal was a member of the Indian Team for the 1st Asia

Pacific Deaf Badminton Championship held in Kula Lumpur in December 2002 and won silver and bronze medals. She won two gold, one silver and one bronze medals at the 2nd National Badminton Championship for the hearing impaired. Kajal has to her credit two gold, two silver and one bronze medals at 1st National Sports Championship for hearing impaired and a silver medal at the 6th Asia Pacific Games for the hearing impaired held in Taiwan.

She has also won the Delhi University's Best Sports Women Award for 1999-2000 and 2000-2001. Her two favourite sportspersons are Sachin Tendulkar and Boris Becker. Kajal is a pro at badminton, table tennis and horse riding. She is also really good in softball.

Though she loves sports, Kajal has never let her academics suffer. She completed a course in fashion designing from the School of Art & Fashion Designing and also beauty therapy and hair dressing from Shehnaz World International Institute.

'DON'T NEED SYMPATHY'

Kajal says no one should be discriminated against on the basis of their handicaps. She says, "I have seen many people thinking I am not capable enough. But I have proved them wrong. I want people with handicaps to believe that they have the right to live a happy life."

Kajal's mother says their Defence background was good for her daughter. She says, "We got immense support from our neighbours while Kajal was growing up. But now that my husband has retired, the civilian world does not look half as co-operative. In fact, despite all her achievements, they pity my daughter."

This is one of the reasons why Kajal is actively involved with the Delhi Foundation of Deaf Women and has been working as an English Instructor for children with hearing impairment.

es (LKG & UKG), they both of them. If they have one class at pre-primary level, they can run only one," said Lovely.

He said no school will interview any children. Lovely said "Apart from it, educational levels of parents and monetary status have nothing to do with children's education. So, no school can question this."

In another development, on December 14, the Supreme Court will hear a petition challenging Delhi Government's decision to fix four years as the minimum age for admission to nursery.

Speeding truck kills 20-year-old girl in Gzb

SURENDRA PAL SINGH

A 20-year-old girl, Preeti, died on the spot when the scooter she was riding was hit by a truck on Thursday. The incident took place in the evening at Hapur road, when Preeti was returning home from her institute. She was a BCA student at the Institute of Management Studies, Ghaziabad.

Preeti, a resident of Govindpuram, was crossing a railway track when a truck rammed into her.

The truck driver fled the spot abandoning the vehicle. Area residents rushed her to the nearby Yashoda Hospital where she was declared brought dead.

Preeti was pursuing her computer education at IMS and was a meritorious student. Her father Ajit Singh is a leading lawyer.

The Ghaziabad Bar Association has demanded the immediate arrest of the truck driver.