

## THE UNDAUNTED GIRLS

Muslim girls in Hijab are seen everywhere: in trains, bazaars and mostly in colleges . Many say that they if they wear hijab their parents and community permit them to study further – as they are seen as conforming to their culture and will not go astray. They also feel safe. What so ever may be the reason; more and more girls from traditional and conservative families are going in for higher studies and excelling themselves. In the recent past –three hijab wearing Muslim girls made headlines .They are Raushan Jawaad, Neda Fatima Sheikh and Aamera Khan.

### RAUSHAN JAWAAD



### A TOI picture

Raushan’s achievement is awesome. It is a lesson in courage and perseverance and an inspiration for all.

Raushan was certified 88% disabled when 8 years back she lost both her legs after being pushed out of a crowded local when she was travelling home after giving her exams at Anjuman Girl’s College Bandra . Raushan’s a brilliant student who had scored 92.15% in her 10th exam, now found her dream of becoming a doctor shattered as she lay traumatised in the hospital. Though it took her a year to get over her harrowing experience, it didn’t deter her resolve and with renewed vigour she started pursuing her dream.

But the path held more challenges – she encountered another hurdle when despite being a 3<sup>rd</sup> ranker in CET handicapped quota of the Medical entrance Exam she was denied admission in the medical college since according to her medical fitness test she had 88% disability against the permissible limit of 70%.

She was however undeterred and took recourse to court and her parents filed a PIL in the Mumbai High court. Her regular presence during the court hearings was noticed by Chief Justice Mohit Shah who directed that she be allowed admission. “When she can come all the

way to the court why do you think she won't be able to come to class?"He asked .Raushan was able to get admission in the prestigious Seth GS medical College in 2011.

Raushan's parents – her father Jawaad Ahmed, a vegetable seller near Yusuf Ismail College and her mother, a house wife – are intensely proud of their daughter who has now passed the MBBS exam in the first class.

Raushan's deep desires is for working for the poor and under privileged sections of society.

Hope she has success in all her endeavours.

NEDA FATIMA



A TOI picture

Bhendi bazaar – a Muslim ghetto has a dubious reputation of being conservative and backward –with no emphasis on modern education; it is considered to be dotted with madrasas and crawling with Mullahs of all hues. So when a 23 year old Neda Fatima , daughter of a social worker , the late Shahid Sheikh topped the bachelor of Dental Surgery exam (BDS) conducted by Maharashtra University of Health Science competing with 3000 students from 26 colleges ,it came as a big surprise .

Youngest of six siblings Neda gives the credit to her achievement to her late father who encouraged his children to acquire education and considered it the only way to progress. And he believed that of all his children Neda was the most capable and should strive to top the Dentist exam. It was unfortunate that he died of cancer just a week before her results were announced .But topping BDS was not the only dream he wanted her to fulfil: he wanted her to enter politics and do social work and serve the people. And that's exactly what she has decided to do. She stood for the Municipal elections representing Bhendi bazaar on a Samajwadi ticket .She wanted to improve its infrastructure and provide better facilities for students to make progress in life. Unfortunately she lost. But she has not given up the dream. At 24, there is still time – and many milestones to achieve.

## AAMERA KHAN

It is not just in the metropolis of Mumbai that one sees girls from the Muslim community on the march. 23 year old Aamera Sanam Khan of Akola town (purana shaher) has put the district town in the news having topped the Bachelor of Science exam in Physics and Maths. A student of Shri Shivaji College, she has with her hard work and dedication won 6 medals (3 gold and 3 bronze) and two cash awards, all of which were awarded at the hands of the Governor of Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu, His Excellency Vidhya Sagar Rao at Amravati University.

What is noteworthy is that Aamera studied through the Urdu medium till 10th standard, and then switched to English so that she could study Science and Maths. Hence she feels that if one works hard, the medium doesn't matter – what is essential is the will and determination. She does accept that it is difficult for Muslim girls to go in for higher education and that she was lucky in getting support from her father who works in a Hajj and Travel agency.

Aamera has enrolled for the MSc course and plans to appear for the Net exam. Her aim is to start free coaching class Muslim girls in Physics and maths in which subjects there is a dearth of good teachers and excellence in these subjects is necessary to get into Engineering and Technological fields as well as to develop a scientific mind set.