

JB Petit High School for Girls, Mumbai

Ranked India's #1 all-girls day school in the EW India School Rankings 2016, JBPHSG has acquired a formidable reputation for empowering girl children

DIPTA JOSHI

ONE OF THE OLDEST all-girls education institutions in the country, the JB Petit High School for Girls, Mumbai (JBPHSG, estb.1860) has acquired a formidable reputation for offering high quality academic and extra-curricular education to girl children in a contemporary and empowering learning environment. In the latest EducationWorld India School Rankings 2016, JBPHSG is ranked India's #1 all-girls day school. Moreover, this K-X school is also ranked among the country's Top 10 CISCE-affiliated schools in terms of students' average score in the class X ICSE board exam 2016 (92.7 percent). Currently, JB Petit has an enrolment of 917 students mentored by 65 teachers.

"Our mission is empowerment of girl children through education and opportunity. Therefore, we provide an environment of creativity, freedom and joyous learning in which our students articulate their views fearlessly and develop the courage of their convictions," says **Benaifer P. Kutar**, an alumna of Mumbai University, who signed up as a primary teacher in 1995 and was appointed principal of JBPHSG in 2010.

Sited in south Mumbai's downtown Fort area, the school's original three-storeyed edifice with its Gothic gargoyles, gracefully sculpted arches, pillars, staircases and an eagle atop the pediment, is a Grade II A heritage structure certified by the Maharashtra government. In 1938 and again in 1960, new academic wings were added and currently, the school's built-up area of 2,687 sq metres offers modern classrooms, laboratories and art/crafts rooms, a multipurpose sports square and gymnasium.

Moreover, in response to growing demand for higher secondary classes, the school's management is set to in-



JB Petit principal Benaifer Kutar & students: girl child empowerment mission

roduce the IB diploma programme of the Geneva-based International Baccalaureate Organisation (IBO). Therefore, a major campus redevelopment project has been initiated.

This 'JB Building Excellence' redevelopment project was officially launched last March with renowned heritage and conservation architect Abha Narain Lambah appointed project consultant. The master plan and several heritage-related no-objection certificates and permissions for the project have been received by the school with Zia Mody — one of the country's top lawyers and a trustee of the school — heading the project advisory committee. A major fund-raising campaign has also been launched to raise the estimated Rs.25 crore project cost.

"Project Building Excellence is expected to be completed by 2018-19 and the new block will be named

the Shirin Darasha Memorial Block, in memory of the school's legendary principal, the late Shirin F. Darasha (1938-2012) who was at the helm from 1973-2007. Under her guidance and tutelage, JB Petit transformed into a centre for academic and co-curricular education excellence and the country's premier all-girls day school," says Kutar, in a generous tribute to her predecessor.

Inevitably, this vintage girls school has an interesting history. It was promoted in 1860 by a Miss Prescott, and was originally known as Miss Prescott's Fort Christian School. Subsequently in 1878, it was renamed the Frere Fletcher School until 1915, when Jehangir Bomanji Petit, a well-known businessman, acquired the school. Since then, the Petit family has been actively involved in its administration. The school's high-profile board of