

Founder's Day celebrations at Lawrence School conclude

AMBIKA SHARMA

SANAWAR, OCTOBER 4

The 165th Founder's Day celebrations of Lawrence School concluded here today with an NCC parade by students with the school flag.

Sukhbir Singh Badal, Deputy Chief Minister of Punjab and alumnus of the school (Nilgiri House, 1980 batch), who was the chief guest, gave a cheque for Rs 1 crore to the school.

Addressing the gathering, he said a sound foundation was laid by good education and the school's motto, "never give in", helped attain success.

He added that good values and education inculcated in school helped through thick and thin as no one could steal anyone else's knowledge.

Headmaster Praveen Vasisht highlighting achievements of students in academics, sports and co-curricular activities. He said eight students scored a cumulative grade point average of above 9.6 in the class X examinations. He said students won laurels in shooting, sports events and debate, declamation and quiz contests.

Students of the 1962 and 1987 batches, which celebrated their golden and silver



Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Singh Badal takes the salute during the school parade at Lawrence School in Sanawar on Thursday.

jubilees, presented a march-past. Owing their success to their education, the former students, a majority of whom had joined the Army, said it was a nostalgic moment. At least 15 students of the 1962 batch had joined the Army, they recalled.

The chief guest awarded medals and trophies to winners. They included Chief of Army Staff trophy for best all-round boy and girl in class XII for 2011-12 to Manvijay Singh Negi and Disha Dobta

Chauhan, Yashpal Choudhary gold medal for standing first in class XII to Priyal Mewara, Shadi Ram and Bhagwati Devi gold medal for boy and girl standing first in class X to Areeb Imam and Swati Saha, Thimmaya cup for organisational ability to Samrath Singh, Carlyll cup for progress to Chandni Verma, Chief of Army Staff cup for best cadet to Manvijay Singh Negi, Chief of Air Staff trophy for academic excellence to Nilgiri House,

Catherine Longman cup for public speaking to Himalaya House, Khetarpal bravery award for exemplary bravery to Prajesh Jung Bahadur Rana, old Sanawarian achiever of the year award to Gen Gaurav Shamsber Rana of the 1971 batch, Chief of Nepalese army teacher's excellence award for outstanding efforts to improve class XII results to Dr Praveen Kumar Gautam and Nipman teacher of the year award to Neelam Tahlan.

Sukhbir gifts alma mater Rs 1-cr 'development grant'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 4

ON THE annual day celebrations of Lawrence School at Sanawar on Thursday, Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhbir Badal gifted Rs 1 crore to his alma mater. Sukhbir, who was the chief guest on the occasion, while handing over the cheque to the school said it was "his government's contribution to the school".

Later while speaking to mediapersons, he denied allegations levelled by Congress leader Sukhpal Khaira that the grant came from the Punjab Nirman Programme funds. Stating that it is well within rights of the state government to give development grants, he said an "issueless" Congress was raking up the issue to get political mileage.

Khaira reacted by saying that he presented documented proof in his press conference in Chandigarh on Wednesday that the finance department had sanctioned the money wide letter no 3/45/09-FE 6/641 dated October 1. "I challenge Sukhbir to factually prove my allegations wrong or he should tender a public apology for misleading the electorate of Punjab for squandering tax payers' money," Khaira said in a statement.



With headmaster Praveen Vasisht at Lawrence School, Sanawar.

SUMIT MALHOTRA

The letter issued by the finance department on October 1 had stated: "The money can be sanctioned under the head 'PM-10: State-level initiative (Punjab Nirmaan Programme)' provided the council of ministers approves it." The Punjab cabinet gave the grant its nod in its meeting held on October 2. The memorandum put before the cabinet said many students from Punjab study at the school.

According to the 12th Five Year Plan document of the Punjab planning department, an outlay of Rs 1 crore had been earmarked for the annual plan of 2012-13. On Wednesday, the department had admitted to releasing the money after cabinet sanction on October 2, saying it is not the first precedent of its kind in Punjab or other states.

Claiming that his opposition to the said grant was based on merit, Khaira said 18,397 government schools in Punjab are in a pitiable condition. "The children sit on the floor to study, there are no toilets, no safe drinking water and no teachers. Had Sukhbir Badal given this said grant to primary schools of the state, we could have improved the condition of at least more than two dozen schools," he added.

"His deep concern for his school should have seen donation from his profit-making hotel ventures such as Oberoi and Trident in Gurgaon or his many other profitable business ventures. The Rs 1-crore grant given to elitist Sanawar Public School should be withdrawn immediately or we would be left with no option but to move the high court," Khaira said.