

The Himalayan

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Weather: Fair
Max: 29-31°C Min:
Sunrise 05:27 Su

Capital * 12

Tilganga doctor bags Magsaysay award

Himalayan News Service

Kathmandu, July 31

Dr Sanduk Ruit, medical director of Tilganga Eye Centre, is among this year's recipients of the prestigious Ramon Magsaysay award. He won the award for work in providing lenses at an affordable price to the partially blind poor people.

Dr Ruit is the third Nepali to win the award. He got the award under the category of Peace and International Understanding of which Mother Teresa, too, was a recipient.

The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation (RMAF), in a press release, stated that the award goes to Dr Ruit for "plac-



Dr Sanduk Ruit

ing Nepal in the forefront of developing safe, effective and economic procedures for cataract surgery, enabling the needlessly blind in

even the poorest countries to see again."

Dr Ruit took the initiative, with the Fred Hollows Foundation, to manufacture these lenses for about US\$ 4, making it affordable for the poor people. The cost of an intra ocular lens used for modern cataract surgery is very high — about US\$ 100 per lens.

"I am feeling exhilarated to be awarded the Magsaysay which was bagged by Mother Teresa," Dr Sanduk Ruit told this daily. "My work for the people who cannot afford to see this world has been rewarded." "I am hopeful that this award would help boost the morale of the country especially when the image of the

country has been tarnished," he added.

Hailing from the Olang Chung Gola in Taplejung, he won a scholarship to study medicine in India. He completed his Residency in Ophthalmology from the All India Institute for Medical Sciences in 1984. He was inspired to serve the people after a week-long medical camp at Dhanga-di in the 80s. "It was an overwhelming experience to see that a small effort could make a huge impact on the lives of the poor rural people," said Dr Ruit. "In a world grown increasingly complex, divided and cynical, these remarkable Asians persist in addressing longstanding, painful social is-

ssues," the RMAF said in a statement. TEC had been exporting advanced quality Intra Ocular Lenses to 20 countries for medical purposes. Ninety-nine per cent of the patients in Nepal get intraocular lenses during the cataract operation, thanks to TEC's invention. In India only 80 per cent get IOC lens. In Bangladesh and Pakistan the percentage is 50 and 60 respectively.

"I just want to give this message to all those who are dreaming and working hard to build a new Nepal: don't lose hope and work towards creating a stable country," said Dr Ruit.

The annual awards will be presented to the recipients at a

ceremony in Manila on July 31. Other award winners include Cambodian Ek Sokha, a survivor of the Khmer Rouge terror, for bringing clean water to a million people; head of the Phnom Penh Supply Authority, Heng Samrin's Park Won Sang, for his work in public service; Eugenio Lopez III, Apostol, 81, a Philippine nationalist and publisher, for his role in the journal and his contribution to the journal and creative arts award; Arsenio Balisacan, 38, head of Incanto, for his work against corruption; Meloto, 56, and Kalinga Development Foundation in the Philippines, for their community leader