

# THE ASIAN AGE

MUMBAI FRIDAY 27 JULY 2018

## Two Indians among Ramon Magsaysay Award winners

### Magsaysay for city shrink, Ladakh man

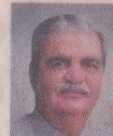
Manila: Two Indians—one a psychiatrist who works for the mentally-ill street persons and another whose initiative to harness science and culture creatively for economic progress improved the lives of the Ladakhi youth—were on Thursday declared the winners of this year's Ramon Magsaysay Award. Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk are among six individuals who were won the award. —PTI  
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Bharat Vatwani and Sonam Wangchuk are among six individuals who were declared winners of the award, regarded as the Asian version of the Nobel Prize.

Mr Vatwani was recognised for "his tremendous courage and healing compassion in embracing India's mentally-afflicted destitute, and his steadfast and magnanimous dedication to the work of restoring and affirming the human dignity of even the most ostracised," the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation said in its citation for the winner.

Mr Vatwani, who is based in Mumbai, and his wife started an informal operation of bringing mentally-ill street persons



Bharat  
Vatwani

### HONOUR ROLL

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to their private clinic for treatment, leading them to establish Shradha Rehabilitation Foundation in 1988, aimed at rescuing mentally-ill persons living on the streets; providing free shelter, food, and psychiatric treatment; and reuniting them with their families.

Mr Wangchuk, 51, was recognised for "his uniquely systematic, collaborative and community-driven reform of learning systems in remote northern India, thus improving the life opportunities of Ladakhi youth, and his constructive engagement of all sectors in local society to harness science and culture cre-

actively for economic progress, thus setting an example for minority peoples in the world," the citation said.

Mr Wangchuk was a 19-year-old engineering student at the National Institute of Technology in Srinagar, when he went into tutoring to finance his schooling and help woefully unprepared students pass the national college matriculation exams. In 1988, after earning his engineering degree, Wangchuk founded Students' Education and Cultural Movement of Ladakh (SECMOL) and started coaching Ladakhi student, 95% of whom used to fail the govern-

ment exams.

In 1994, with Wangchuk in the lead, "Operation New Hope" (ONH) was launched to expand and consolidate the partnership-driven educational reform programme.

Youk Chhang from Cambodia, Maria de Lourdes Martins Cruz from East Timor, Howard Dee from the Philippines and Vo Thi Hoang Yen from Vietnam are other winners of the award.

The Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation president Carmencita Abella said the winners "are clearly Asia's heroes of hope, moving their societies forward through their unequivocal pursuit of the larger good.

"In genuine solidarity with the disadvantaged and marginalised, each one has addressed real and complex issues with bold, and creative, and pragmatic action that has engaged others to do likewise. The results of their leadership are manifest in the changed lives of the many they have influenced," she said.

—PTI