KEM doc dedicates his Saarc award to Dr Patil

Mumbai: A civic hospital doctor has bagged the Saarc Youth Award 2009 for his contribution towards the rehabilitation work in flood-hit Bihar in 2008. He has dedicated the award to a fellow doctor who died during the mission after being struck by lightning.

Dr Ravikant Singh, a resident doctor from KEM Hospital in Parel, spent more than six months coordinating Mumbai youths’ efforts in providing medical and humanitarian aid to flood-hit people in six districts of Bihar. Incidentally, this was the relief operation in which one of the Mumbai resident doctors, Dr Chandrakant Patil, lost his life after being struck by a lightning in September 2008. The effort was organised under the banner of Doctors For You.

At a press conference held in the city on Tuesday, Dr Singh said that he was dedicating the Saarc award to KEM Hospital “for his education” and Dr Patil “without whom I would not have got the support, both emotional and physical, for the relief operation”.

“I hail from Bihar and the moment I heard that Bihar villages were flooded after a dam breach in Nepal, I wanted to go and help out. Dr Chandrakant Patil was with me throughout the process, speaking to other resident doctors to join us, applying for leave, etcetera. In fact, he told me that he would join me in the mission even if our leave applications were rejected,” he said.

The young doctor died on the fifth day of his stay in Bihar, but some of his friends stayed on to treat patients. In his memory, they tied up with NGO Mercy Malaysia to set up a mother and child clinic in Bihar which has since treated over 30,000 people and 950 pregnant women.

Dr Singh will receive the award in Thimpu, Bhutan, on April 27. “I hope the award will help in creating awareness about the need for a regional response centre. If we have such a team in Saarc, we won’t need to wait until teams from the US and the UK come in,” said Dr Singh, who wants to work towards setting up such a centre.

KEM Hospital dean Dr Sanjay Oak said that he was proud that his student had made such a meaningful contribution to society.