130 strike gold for youthful zeal in their pursuits

One award winner slated to meet UN Secretary-General in New York

BY MARIA ALMEINOA

A TOTAL of 130 young people received the National Youth Achievement Gold Award yesterday from President S R Nathan.

The youth, from different schools and backgrounds, were recognised for their passion concerning issues relating to the environment, children and drug abuse, among others. Among the award recipients was Miss Rumya Ananthan, 20, a nurse at KK Women’s and Children’s Hospital who is passionate about health-care issues.

She volunteers at free health screenings in rural parts of Malaysia where she helps carry out eye, blood pressure and blood glucose checks.

Miss Rumya, whose parents are restaurant managers, also attended the inaugural Global Youth Meeting on Health in India in November last year, together with 225 young people from 35 countries.

After the session, she was selected as one of only four youth to attend an event to be held in New York later this month, in conjunction with the United Nations General Assembly.

There, she will present to UN Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon a youth health report and a million-signature petition on changes to health-care policies affecting youth.

Fellow award winner Regina Oon, 22, intends to continue with her environmental conservation work.

“The NYAA programme gave me the opportunity to take my work further and make it more meaningful,” said the daughter of a civil servant and real-estate agent.

To receive the award, which started in 1995, youth aged between 16 and 25 have to undertake activities under five sections - service, adventurous journey, sports, physical recreation and a residential project.

Last year, there were 248 winners of the Gold Award, which is now biennially given out annually instead of biennially.