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Civilian Bravery Awards for three

by Rajmi Manatunga

Three civilians who risked their lives to save the lives of others on different occasions were honoured with Civilian Bravery Awards by Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse yesterday.

Among the persons honoured at a ceremony organised by the Foundation for Civilian Bravery in Sri Lanka were three individuals from different walks of life including a teacher who jumped into a fire to save a student of his school, a youngster who saved 21 people caught in the Southern floods and a three-wheeler driver who sacrificed his life in saving two women drowning in the sea near Galle Face.

Delivering the keynote address the Prime Minister said the whole nation appreciated and was proud of these brave civilians at a time where human values are gradually deteriorating.

"Today, we live in a society which has been drastically changed after the introduction of the open economy. This is a time where ordinary people rarely dare to protect and save others' lives at the risk of their own. In such circumstances the acts of bravery of these individuals are truly commendable," the Prime Minister added.

Prime Minister Rajapakse awarded the Gold medal of Civilian Bravery to Channa Darshana Ranatunga, a teacher of the Wennappuwa Anuruddha Vidyalaya while the Silver Medal was received by H. A Punyawardene, an unemployed youth. Another special award for the bravery of Basil Fernando who died saving two drowning women was received by his wife Anoma Nishanthi.