



PROUD MOMENT ... Geeta receiving the award from Law

Researcher wins coveted grant

"BENJAMIN Franklin discovered electricity while playing with a kite and observing the effects of lightning but most of us need more than a kite," said Dr Geeta Selvarajah at the recent Malaysia Toray Science Foundation (MTSF) presentation ceremony.

Geeta, who is with the School of Science and Mathematics, Inti College Malaysia in Bandar Baru Bangi, is the first recipient from a private higher education institution of the coveted science and technology research grant from MTSF.

The other nine recipients of the annual award, which was presented by Minister of Science, Technology and Environment Datuk Law Hieng Ding, were from local public universities and government research bodies.

Geeta received the RM20,000 grant for her research project on the genetic characterisation of the *Jasminum* species found in

Malaysia.

"The grant by the Malaysian Toray Science Foundation is much needed to engage in science and technology research which generally requires much investment in equipment, facilities, materials as well as human resource," she said.

A graduate of Universiti Malaya, Geeta has presented numerous papers on the genetic population of *Tilapia* fish — her area of expertise. She developed a keen interest in *Jasminum* when she realised the importance of this plant.

"There is much potential in the *Jasminum* species," she said.

"Jasmine flower oil is used in perfumes and cosmetics. As a medicinal plant, the different species of *Jasminum* have traditionally been used to treat certain illnesses, including cancer."

Her series of science books for upper primary pupils is expected to be published at the end of this year.