

SCIENCE AND CULTURE

VOLUME 82 □ NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2016 □ NOS. 11-12

EDITORIAL

SERENDIPITY



result in a hurricane elsewhere.

In the case of ISNA, a personal tragedy in a modest Tamil family a hundred years ago has resulted in a temporal chain of events culminating in a bequest that will serve as a lifeline for this journal in the years to come. As Editor-in-Chief, it is my honor and privilege to announce a generous Rs 25 lakh donation from the family of Ms N Meenakshi of Nemam village that will be placed in a corpus fund to be used for the publication of *Science and Culture*.

The late Ms Meenakshi's brother was a collector for the Bengal Presidency and he died in a fluke accident during his voyage back from England, when he fell overboard while waving to his family at the harbour. His body was never recovered, and the British Government

In chaos theory, the butterfly effect is used to explain a sensitive dependence on initial conditions whose slightest variation leads to drastic and unpredictable changes in the outcome. A more poetic definition, courtesy of meteorologists, is that the fluttering of a butterfly's wings in one location can

compensated the family monetarily. While the money was wisely invested by Ms Meenakshi for the family, it was her desire that a portion of it should be set aside for charitable organizations.

Through a series of serendipitous events, I had reached out to Vasant Natarajan, Professor of Physics at the Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore to raise funds for ISNA. As it turned out, Prof Natarajan's mother Ms Maya Natarajan, who is Ms Meenakshi's grand-daughter and trustee, was planning to decide on the organizations to donate where the money will be well spent. Hearing of ISNA's financial plight, Prof Natarajan convinced his mother to donate a part of the funds to ISNA.

In its formative years, ISNA survived through generous personal donations from philanthropists like Sir U N Brahmachari, Acharya P C Ray, Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Dr S C Law, Dr B C Law, Mr G D Birla, Mr M N Sur and others. Today in its 82nd year, we are proud to add another shining name to the list of our benefactors and thank the Natarajan family for this much-needed and much-appreciated sustenance.

Maya Natarajan's selfless act serves as a useful reminder that even in this age of commerce and profit, there exist patrons who believe in our mission to advance public understanding of science and culture.

Maya Natarajan's selfless act serves as a useful reminder that even in this age of commerce and profit, there exist patrons who believe in our mission to advance public understanding of science and culture. □

S.C. Roy