

# Lifeline for centre of learning

▶ CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"The ministry said it would send the minutes to the state government and the university. We are yet to receive it," says the VC.

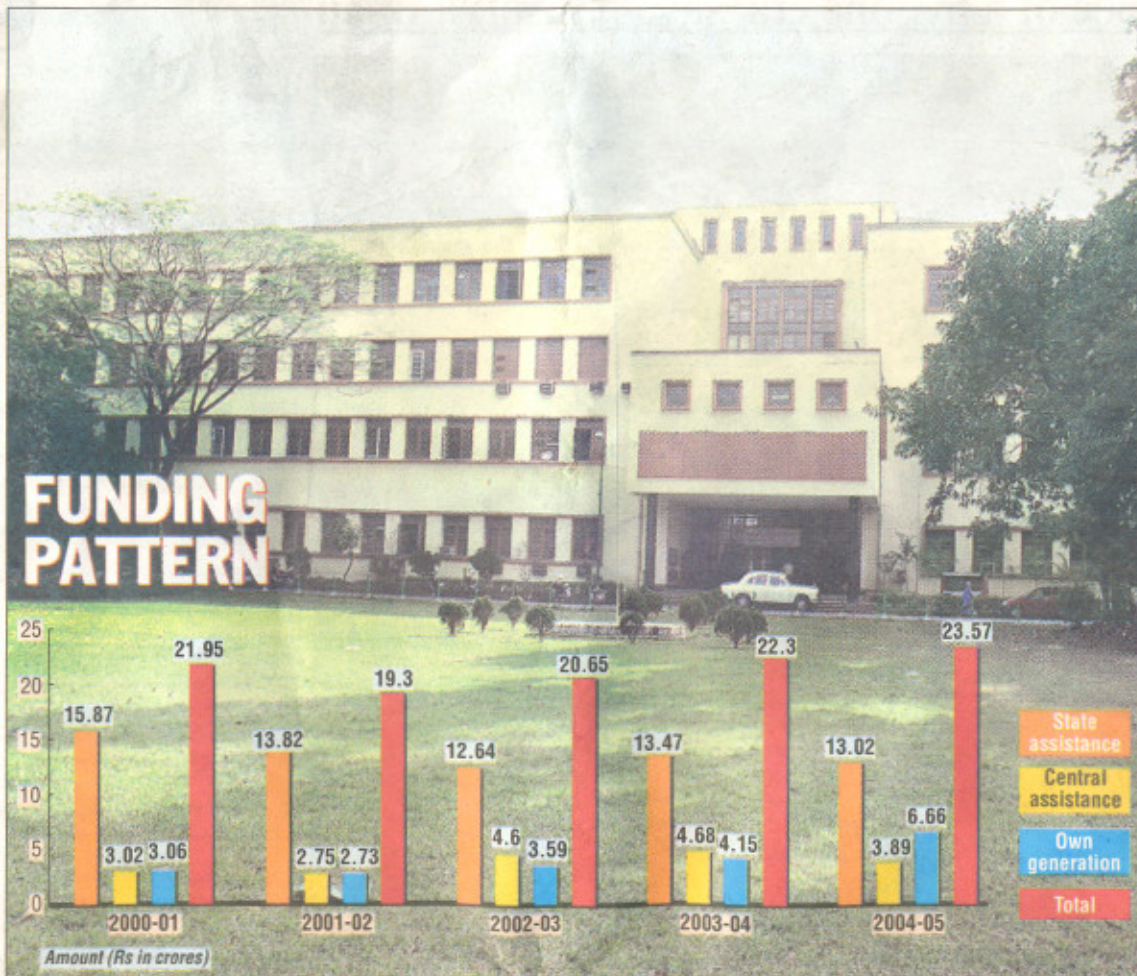
In fact, there isn't a single document on the IIT status or on the UGC grant from the government of India. "Unless I get any written communication on this, I will not be able to comment," adds Banerjee.

Not being granted IIT or Institute of National Importance (INI) status could sound a death knell for the institute, warn teachers and faculty members of BESU. Poised to celebrate the 150th year of its existence, the institute which became a university in 2004, is eagerly looking forward to the funds that will automatically flow in when — and if — the status is conferred.

## Matter of survival

"If we do not get IIT/INI status, then it becomes a matter of survival. An institute that has for the past 150 years generated top-level technical manpower for the nation is now looking towards the Centre for support and nurturing to continue its march forward," says professor N.R. Bandopadhyay, president of BESUTA.

But will the Centre respond? It is indeed ironical that Delhi itself came calling at Shibpur dangling the IIT carrot. The university opened its doors, presented its case for upgrade, underlined its thrust areas and de-



## Knowledge creation

"Our college is not only disseminating knowledge, but also creating it through multiple domains of research," says Bandopadhyay.

Scholars are working on cutting-edge subjects like intelligent motion control, space technology, fuel cell technology and more.

The funding for these, to the tune of Rs 16 crore, has been sourced from organisations like Department of Science and Technology, the UGC, Centre for Science and Industrial Research, DRDO, ISRO and from the government of Japan, Water for People, USA, and Conrad Hill Foundation.

The frustration at BESU is being caused by the inherent gap between aspirations and resources. If the vision for the university is to be one of the topmost in the country, it needs to augment its research facilities. "The university has plans to introduce new departments in chemical engineering, bio-technology, food technology, safety and occupational health engineering," feels Bandopadhyay.

BESU also proposes to establish new schools in nanoscience and nanotechnology, bio-medical engineering, ecology, infrastructure and human settlement management, and a host of other new-age disciplines.

To realise all this, the university needs to acquire about 200 acres of land not just to expand its existing campus but also to create an addition-