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2.5 lakh Euros for city's growth

Cologne University doles out funds for water, health-related problems

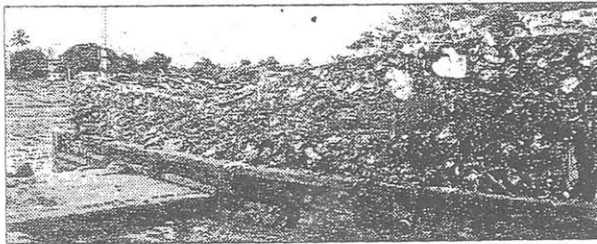
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

MARCH 18

THERE'S a bridge that connects Pune and the Pearl River Delta in China — both are emerging as megacities, which is why the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research is interested in helping them grow more systematically. The ministry will give them technical assistance for better infrastructure and quality of life.

Pune, chosen from among 100 other applicants, for this 11-year timeline project, will concentrate on water, health and quality of life.

An initial grant of 2,50,000 Euros for the first two years beginning March 1, 2006, from the Cologne University will help collect data that reflects present problems in water and



Cologne University funds to address water problems

health because they adversely affect the quality of life.

While Cologne University and its partners will provide technical guidance on behalf of the German government, Bharati Vidyapeeth's Institute of Environment, Education and Research will chip in here. The Pune Municipal Corporation will support the effort by sharing the data with Bharati Vidyapeeth and effect its implementation.

Consider this. Ulrich Nitschke, head of depart-

ment of Inwent International, one of the partners stated that, "Pune has already applied for funds under the JNNURM. We are looking at possibilities of whether our solutions, let's say, for health or water can be tagged to the JNNURM."

After completion of the introductory phase when the problems afflicting the city have been zeroed upon, the new appraisal will determine funding in the implementation phase. And a review will be held after

every three years for further funding.

Predicting that India will have the most megacities, Nitschke said, "If this project in Pune is successful, then it would be an example for other megacities. Of course, the PMC will have to play a crucial role in its success."

Dr Erach Bharucha, who heads the Institute of Environment, Education and Research, was instrumental in getting this project. "No technological assistance is workable if it does not have a social relevance. That's where our role is crucial— any solution must have social adaptability." Bharucha and his team will gather the data to arrive at a solution that is economically viable as well.

An MoU to this effect was signed by Municipal Commissioner Nitin Kareer.