NIT-K signs MoU with National Jute Board to develop technology to make geocell products from jute

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The National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NIT-K), Surathkal, recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Jute Board, under the Union Ministry of Textiles to develop a technology to make geocell products from jute and standardise them for various engineering applications. Under this MoU, the Board has awarded the NIT-K a three-year research project with ₹48 lakh grant, a release from the NIT-K said on Friday.

According to Sreevalsa Kolathayar, the Principal Investigator of the project who is also an Assistant Professor in the Department of Civil Engineering at the NIT-K, the project proposes among engineering applications to help improve the durability of roads, prevent potholes and improve the stability of slopes to prevent land slips, using jute in the form of cells. The commercially available polymer-based geocells are costly and not readily available in rural areas and small towns. This navigates towards inventing an eco-friendly, cost-effective cellular confinement product that satisfies engineering strength requirements. Jute is a natural material that is plentifully available in India. Almost 85% of the world's jute cultivation is concentrated in the Ganges Delta. It is high time to explore its diverse applications and widen its usage in the form of different products.

Centre for Water Resource Development and Management (CWRDM), a unit of Kerala State Council for Science Technology and Environment and Kerala Highway Research Institute are collaborating agencies of the project and Birla Jute Mill is the industry partner, the release said. Recently, Mahadeb Datta, Deputy Director of the Board, while delivering a lecture on civil engineering applications of jute geotextiles at the NIT-K, said that the jute geocell proposed by NIT-K is one of its kind and will find extensive applications and massive usage once the technology is developed and transferred to the industry.

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