

NITK inks MoU with National Jute Board to make jute geocells

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THE National Institute of Technology Karnataka (NITK) has signed an MoU with the National Jute Board of the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, to develop technology to make geocell products from jute and standardize them for various engineering applications. The research project worth Rs 48 lakh will be headed by Dr Sreevalsa Kolathayar, as

the principal investigator, Dr Raviraj HM and Dr Somasekhara Rao T, as the co-PIs, and Prof A U Ravishankar, STA PMGSY as Advisor. KSCSTE-Centre for Water Resource Development and Management (CWRDM) and Kerala Highway Research Institute (KHRI) are collaborating agencies for this project, and Birla Jute Mill (A unit of Birla Corporation Limited) is the industry partner.

A release from NITK said the commercially available poly-

mer-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 India explores its diverse applications and widens its usage in the form of

different products, the release said. The project by NITK proposes a very affordable and eco-friendly method of ground improvement using jute in the form of cells, it added.

Recently, Dr Mahadeb Datta, deputy director of National Jute Board, visited NITK campus for fast-tracking of the project. He also delivered an expert lecture on Civil Engineering applications of Jute Geotextiles, which more than 200 researchers and students at-

tended. Dr Datta said that the jute geocell proposed by NITK is one of its kind and will find extensive applications and massive usage once the technology is developed and transferred to the industry. Dr Sreevalsa added that the wide use of jute for infrastructure projects would pave the way for achieving UN sustainable development goals, particularly SDG #9 (Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure) and SDG #11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities).