

Cusat developing project to protect State's coastline

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KOCHI: Cochin University of Science and Technology is developing an ambitious plan to save the ecologically-sensitive coastal belt by involving the traditional coir and rubber farmers in the State.

The objective of the project is to evolve a multi-disciplinary coastal zone management by incorporating hard and soft engineering methods. Rubberised coir will be scientifically developed to check sea erosion and to strengthen the coastal belt in the State.

Elaborating on the plan, Joy Job Kulavelil, syndicate member and convener of the standing committee of the syndicate on finance, said that the university will soon approach the Union and State governments seeking financial support for the project.

Stating that an extensive study will be carried out to assess the shore structure and wave character along the Kerala coast, Dr. Kulavelil said that rubber, rubberised coir and other hard fibres will

- **Rubberised coir will be used to check sea erosion**
- **Farmers to benefit from demand for coir and rubber**

be used to provide a geo-textile protection to the coastal region. According to the project report, rubberised coir is durable and will give a strong protection to the coastal belt for more than five years.

The material is environment-friendly and it supports fisheries and coastal activities.

Boost to tourism

Geo-textile cover to the shore is also expected to boost the tourism sector. Beaches, which are affected severely by increasing sea erosion, will get a face-lift thanks to the environmental cover to be set up along the coastal belt, said the report.

Explaining that the project envisages a revival plan for

the ailing coir and rubber sectors in the State, Dr. Kulavelil said that the university scientific team, led by its Registrar N. Chandramohankumar, has suggested that the rubber and coir farmers will get support, as the project requires several tonnes of coir and rubber during its implementation.

It will also promote the plantation of rubber and coconut trees in the State, he said.

The university will also approach the Union Defence Ministry with the project based on reports that the ministry is keen on protecting the coastal belt in the State from any external interference.

According to the project report, the geo-textile covering will provide stability to the coastal region by checking massive erosion.

Scientists at the university will provide the technology for the project. The support of agencies including Rubber Board and Coir Board will also be sought while initiating the project.