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Jute can solve Assam's erosion problem

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The humble jute might be answer to Assam's perennial erosion problem. Besides, the natural fibers could also be helpful for protection against landslides and increase the longevity of the roads across the State. Subrata Gupta, the Jute Commissioner of National Jute Board (NJB) said this during a workshop and added that the Board is now taking up steps to make the people aware about the benefits of jute.

"Assam is a landslide and erosion-prone State and jute geo-textiles could be used to stop erosion of river banks and as a measure to avoid landslides. We have used jute geo-textiles in West Bengal and other parts of the country and it is proved to be useful," Gupta said while adding that it is also cost-effective compared to the synthetic geo-textiles, which is used in many parts of the country against erosion.

Erosion is a perennial problem in Assam and the



State had already lost 4 lakh hectares of land since 1950 due to erosion. Assam's river Island Majuli had also lost a significant amount of its land due to erosion. While the river island used to be of 1,250 square kms in the 1950s, it has an area of only 421.65 square kms in 2001.

On the other hand, Assam is one of the major jute producing States in the country after West Bengal. According to official statistics of the Assam Agriculture department, the State's jute production is likely to be 300,000

bales this year, compared to 200,000 bales last year.

"Assam and other part of the North-East is an eco-sensitive zone. So the use of jute geo-textiles is advisable here as there will be no negative impact of the jute geo-textiles on the environment. In West Bengal, we had used the jute geo-textiles in association with the State Government to stop erosion and it has proved to be useful," said N Sengupta, Project Manager of the NJB.

"We are pushing this technology to the State Governments and it is an

emerging technology which has been proved as cheaper and much more environment friendly compared to synthetic geo-textile," he said.

"Although 170 trial projects were successfully undertaken in 22 States by two Central

Government and 19 State Government agencies so far, no State except for West Bengal has shown practical interest in promoting jute in a big way," he lamented.

He said that the West Bengal Government, which contributes 70 per cent of total jute production in the coun-

try, has already included JGT in its "rate list" allowing it to be used in relevant construction work and also in the process of making its use mandatory for construction of PMGSY and other rural roads in the State.

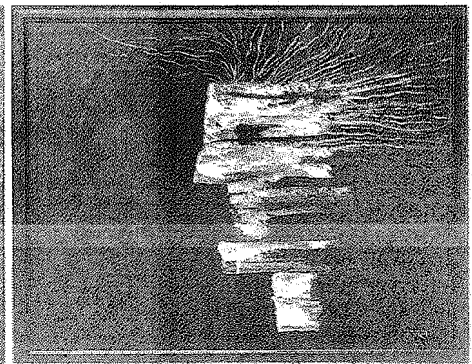
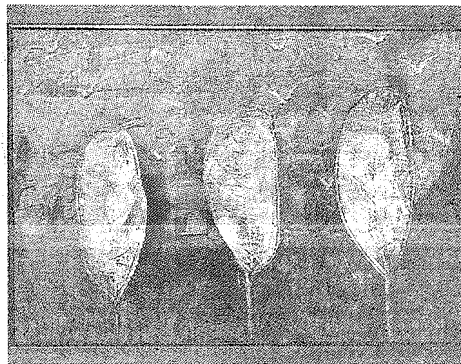
An ode to Shelley in tie-dye and felt

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: On a cold winter day, an exhibition titled "Zephyrus" by Kripal Mathur, being held at the Galerie Romain Rolland at Alliance Française greets you like a warm hug.

The walls and floor are adorned by works by the artist, who has been a design educationalist at the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in New Delhi since 1993 and has used her in-depth knowledge of various textiles to create a show that is truly unique.

The artist has used a multi-pronged approach to art and design by using tradi-



An exhibition of works titled "Zephyrus" by Kripal Mathur is being held at the Galerie Romain Rolland at Alliance Française in New Delhi.

tional crafts of tie-dye, felt making, embroidery, appliqué, patch-work, tufted carpet weaving, and persian soumak weaving in innova-

tive ways.

Her works have been inspired by P.B. Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind", and her artworks and in-

stallations have stanzas and lines from the poem. The works, like the poem, deal with the cold winter season and the coming of spring.