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'Clean' technology for coir fibre extraction

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Scientists at the National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST) here have developed a biological process for the extraction of coir fibre from coconut husk without the environmental hazards associated with conventional retting.

The 'clean' process developed by the environmental technology group at the NIIST unit here involves the use of enzymes to separate the fibres by converting plant compounds into soluble compounds. A high-rate anaerobic reactor removes the dissolved substances.

According to R.S. Praveen Raj, scientist (IP Management & Technology Transfer), NIIST, the technology has the potential to curb the pollution of water-bodies caused by retting of coconut husks.

The clean bioprocess can also be used for processing of natural fibres like jute, banana and pineapple leaf.