

# JK Fenner, IIT-M in R&D pact on biodegradable alternatives to rubber

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Indian Institute of Technology Madras (IIT Madras) is partnering with JK Fenner (India) Ltd, for research and development of a biodegradable alternative to elastomers/rubber products used in the production of various utilitarian items. JK Fenner is providing support for this research project as part of its CSR initiatives.

The CSR funding will also support research to explore modification of natural fibres such as cotton, hemp, among others to substitute synthetic materials in belts, says a release.

A MoU towards this collaboration was signed at IIT Madras Campus on Thursday by Mahesh Panchagnula, Dean (Alumni and Corporate Relations), IIT Madras, and Nagaraju Srirama, President and Director, JK Fenner.

Panchagnula, said this research is vital as although nat-

ural rubber is biodegradable, the finished product is slow to biodegrade, in part, due to the presence of non-degradable chemical units that function as molecular bridges. Srirama said, "research will set a new direction in the rubber industry (belts/hoses) which will be environmentally friendly and will support our initiative towards a sustainable future."