



Boosting Rubber Cultivation in Northeastern India

[Source: TH](#)

Why in News?

The [Rubber Board](#), in partnership with the **Central government and the Automotive Tyre Manufacturers' Association**, is spearheading a project to **increase the area dedicated to natural rubber in the [Northeastern States](#)**, excluding Sikkim but including West Bengal.

- Tyre manufacturers, the primary consumers of rubber, have committed **₹1,000 crore to this five-year project that started in 2021.**

What is the Current Rubber Landscape in India?

- **About Natural Rubber:**
 - Natural rubber is a versatile and essential raw material derived from the **latex or milky sap of certain plant species**, primarily the rubber tree, scientifically known as *Hevea brasiliensis*.
 - This latex contains a **complex mixture of organic compounds**, with the primary component being a polymer called [polyisoprene](#).
- **Growing Conditions:**
 - Tropical climate with annual rainfall of **2000 - 4500 mm** is suited for cultivation.
 - It requires **deep and lateritic fertile soil with an acidic pH of 4.5 to 6.0** and highly deficient in available phosphorus.
 - Minimum and maximum temperature should be ranged from **25 to 34°C with 80 % relative humidity is ideal for cultivation.**
 - Regions prone to heavy winds should be avoided.
 - Bright sunshine amounting to about 2000 hours per annum **at the rate of 6 hours per day through all the months.**
- **Rubber Production and Consumption:**
 - India is **currently the world's fifth largest producer of [natural rubber](#)** while it also remains the second biggest consumer of the material globally. (About **40% of India's total natural rubber consumption is currently met through imports**)
- **Rubber Distribution:**
 - As of now, India boasts approximately **8.5 lakh hectares of rubber plantations.**
 - Major rubber producing states include: **Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Tripura, Assam.**
 - The lion's share of this rubber farming, nearly **5 lakh hectares, is concentrated in the southern states of Kerala and the Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu.**
 - Additionally, **Tripura contributes around 1 lakh hectares** to the rubber production landscape
- **Major Applications:**
 - **Tyre Manufacturing:** Rubber is a key component in tire production due to its excellent grip and wear resistance.
 - **Automotive Parts:** Used in seals, gaskets, hoses, and various components for vehicles.
 - **Footwear:** Commonly used in shoe soles for its cushioning and slip-resistant properties.
 - **Industrial Products:** Found in conveyor belts, hoses, and machinery components.

- **Medical Devices:** Used in gloves, syringe plungers, and medical equipment.
- **Consumer Goods:** Used in products like balloons, erasers, and household gloves.
- **Sporting Goods:** Found in items like tennis balls, golf balls, and protective gear.

What is a Rubber Board?

- The **Rubber Board is a statutory organization constituted under Section (4) of the Rubber Act, 1947** and functions under the administrative control of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.
- The **Board is headed by a Chairman appointed by the Central Government** and has 28 members representing various interests of the natural rubber industry.
 - The Board's headquarters is located at Kottayam in Kerala.
- The Board is responsible for the development of the rubber industry in the country by assisting and encouraging **research, development, extension and training activities related to rubber.**

UPSC Civil Services Examination Previous Year Question (PYQ)

Prelims

Q. Which one of the following groups of plants was domesticated in the 'New World' and introduced into the 'Old World'? (2019)

- (a) Tobacco, cocoa and rubber
- (b) Tobacco, cotton and rubber
- (c) Cotton, coffee and sugarcane
- (d) Rubber, coffee and wheat

Ans: (a)

Q. Match List-I with List-II and select the correct answer using the code given below the Lists: (2008)

	List-I (Board)		List-II (Headquarters)
A.	Coffee Board	1.	Bengaluru
B.	Rubber Board	2.	Guntur
C.	Tea Board	3.	Kottayam
D.	Tobacco Board	4.	Kolkata

Code: A B C D

- (a) 2 4 3 1
- (b) 1 3 4 2
- (c) 2 3 4 1
- (d) 1 4 3 2

Ans: (b)