



## Boosting India's Rubber Industry

**For Prelims:** [Rubber Board](#), [Rubber](#), [National Rubber Policy \(NRP\) 2019](#), [European Union Deforestation Regulation \(EUDR\)](#), [EU](#), [European Commission](#), [Deforestation](#), [Forest Degradation](#), [Palm Oil](#), [Non-Tariff Barrier](#), [India-EU FTA](#), [Tropical Tree](#), [Amazon Rainforest](#), [Loamy or Laterite Soil](#), [Agro Management](#), [Mixed Farming](#), [High-Yielding](#)..

**For Mains:** Initiatives for boosting the rubber industry for meeting global rubber standards.

**Source:** [BL](#)

### Why in News?

The [Rubber Board](#) has launched new initiatives like **Indian Sustainable Natural Rubber (iSNR)** and **INR Konnect Platform** to boost **Indian rubber's** global prominence and increase domestic production.

- It is in line with the [National Rubber Policy \(NRP\) 2019](#) that aims to build an **environmentally sustainable, globally competitive** rubber industry.

### What are the Recent Initiatives Taken in India's Rubber Industry?

- **iSNR Initiative:** Indian Sustainable Natural Rubber (iSNR) Initiative was launched to meet [European Union Deforestation Regulation \(EUDR\)](#) standards.
  - It facilitates **traceability** of rubber products with **certificates verifying origin** and compliance and simplifies the compliance process for stakeholders targeting **EU markets**.
  - It promotes **sustainable rubber production** while positioning Indian natural rubber as a **competitive and responsible choice** in the global market.
- **INR Konnect Platform:** It is a web-based platform aimed at **increasing productivity** by connecting growers of **untapped rubber holdings** with interested adopters.
  - It targets **20-25% of untapped and neglected plantations** in India by absentee landlords to address price drops, and high costs.
- **mRube:** mRube was launched as the **digital marketing platform** of Rubber Board to enhance **marketing and trade efficiency** in the natural rubber sector.
- **Subsidy Hike:** The government plans to **increase subsidies** for rubber cultivation in a **phased manner**.

**Note:** Absentee landlords **own property but don't live or manage it**, relying on **property managers, tenants, or local agents** for maintenance, rent collection, and other operations.

### What is EUDR?

- **About:** EUDR is a **legislative framework** proposed by the [European Commission](#) to address the global issue of [deforestation and forest degradation](#) linked to commodity [supply chains](#).
  - The regulation aims to **reduce** the EU's role in driving **deforestation** and ensure that products linked to deforestation do not enter the **European market**.
- **Mechanism:** Traders or operators must **demonstrate** that their products, when **entering** the EU market or being **exported**, do not originate from **recently deforested land or contribute to forest degradation**.
- **Objectives:** The primary objectives include:
  - **Prevent deforestation** by ensuring listed products don't contribute to it.
  - **Reduce carbon emissions** by at least **32 million metric tonnes** annually.
  - Combat forest degradation linked to **agricultural expansion** of these commodities.
- **Commodities Covered:** It focuses on commodities such as **cattle, wood, cocoa, soy, palm oil, coffee, rubber**, and related products (e.g., leather, chocolate, tires, furniture).
- **Related Concerns:**
  - **Non-Tariff Barrier:** EUDR requires certification that commodities like **cattle, soy, and palm oil** aren't from deforested land, which India sees as [Non-Tariff Barrier](#).
  - **Compliance Burden:** Proving goods are deforestation-free imposes additional administrative and operational burdens, especially on [SMEs](#).
  - **Global Policy Replication:** This could lead to **global certification schemes** becoming the norm creating further pressure on Indian exporters.
  - **Slowing FTA Negotiations:** EUDR has become contentious issues in the ongoing [India-EU FTA](#) negotiations.

## Rubber Board

- The **Rubber Board** is a **statutory body** constituted under the **Rubber Act, 1947**, for the overall development of the **rubber industry** in the country.
- It functions under the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry** of the Government of India.
- The Board's headquarters is situated in **Kottayam, Kerala**.
  - **Rubber Research Institute** works under the Rubber Board.

## What are Key Facts About Rubber?

- **About:** Rubber is an **elastic material** derived from the **latex or milky sap** of certain plant species, primarily the **rubber tree (*Hevea Brasiliensis*)**.
  - This latex is mainly composed of **polyisoprene, a polymer**, along with various organic compounds.
  - Rubber is a [tropical tree](#), native to the [Amazon rainforest](#).
- **Production:** India is the **third largest producer, fourth largest consumer** of natural rubber and **fifth largest consumer** of natural rubber and synthetic rubber together in the world.



- **Kerala (over 90%)** is the largest rubber producer in India, followed by **Tripura (about 9%)**.
- Other prominent states/UTs include **Karnataka, Assam, Tamil Nadu**, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Goa, and the **Andaman & Nicobar Islands**.
- **Required Climatic Conditions:** It requires temperatures between **20°-35°C** and rainfall **over 200 cm** annually.
  - It grows in **loamy or laterite soil**, **sloped or elevated land**, requiring cheap, skilled labor for cultivation.
- **Trade Scenario:** In **2022-23**, India exported **3,700 tonnes of Natural Rubber (NR)**, with the **USA, Germany, UAE, UK, and Bangladesh** as the largest markets.
  - In 2022-23, India imported **5,28,677 tonnes of NR**, mainly from **Indonesia, Thailand, China, South Korea, and Japan**.

## What is National Rubber Policy (NRP) 2019?

- **About:** It is a policy initiative by the **Ministry of Commerce & Industry** to support **production, processing, consumption, and exports**.
- **Objectives:**
  - **Value Chain Development:** Develop the entire rubber industry **value chain** from cultivation to manufacturing.
  - **Rubber Area Expansion:** Increase natural rubber plantations in **non-traditional regions** without harming ecosystems.
  - **Productivity Enhancement:** Improve rubber **productivity** through better **agro management practices**.
  - **Domestic Raw Material Supply:** Ensure **domestic production** meets raw material demand.
  - **Quality Standards:** Ensure processed NR meets **international quality standards**.
- **Rubber Product Manufacturing:** Strengthen the rubber manufacturing sector and promote exports.
- **Policy Interventions:**
  - **National Rubber Status:** Recognize NR as an **agricultural product** to leverage existing policies for income enhancement.
  - **Production Goals:** Achieve **2 million tonnes of NR by 2030** and expand planting areas.
  - **Value Chain Synchronization:** Align activities in NR **production, processing, and product manufacturing** to boost domestic supply.

## Government Initiatives for Promoting Production of Rubber:

- **Sustainable & Inclusive Development of Natural Rubber Sector (SIDNRS)**
- **Rubber Plantation Development Scheme**
- **Rubber Group Planting Scheme**
- **100% Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)** in Rubber Plantation
- **National Rubber Policy 2019**

## What can be Done to Increase Rubber Production in India?

- **Land Diversification:** Encouraging farmers to diversify their land use by integrating rubber with other crops in **mixed farming systems** particularly in **North-Eastern states** having favorable climatic conditions.

- **Scientific Farming:** Promoting [high-yielding varieties](#) and **advanced plantation techniques** (such as **high-density planting**) can help increase production per hectare.
- **Research:** Increased investment in **R&D** to develop more **disease-resistant, climate-resilient, and high-yielding** rubber varieties can play a significant role in improving production.
- **Efficient Tapping:** Training rubber tappers in efficient methods, like **lateral tapping and proper angles**, can enhance **latex quantity and quality, boosting production.**
- **Market Access:** Expanding market access for Indian rubber and rubber-based products (like **rubber-based tires and industrial goods**) to global markets can incentivize farmers to produce more rubber.

## Conclusion

India is advancing its rubber industry through innovative initiatives like the **ISNR, INR Konnect, and mRube platforms**, aligned with the **National Rubber Policy 2019**. These efforts aim to increase **domestic production, enhance sustainability, and ensure global competitiveness** while tackling challenges like compliance with **EUDR** and **expanding market access**.

### **Drishti Mains Question:**

Evaluate the role of the National Rubber Policy 2019 in strengthening India's rubber industry.

## 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)**

<b>List-I</b>	<b>List-II</b>
<b>(Board)</b>	<b>(Headquarters)</b>
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)**

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### **Mains**

**Q.**Why indentured labour was taken by the British from India to other colonies? Have they been able to preserve their cultural identity over there? **(2018)**

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