



# 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)**

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