

Tyre producers worried over low availability of natural rubber

KOCHI, JULY 1: The tyre industry has sought easing of natural rubber availability due to acute shortage being faced in the domestic market. The ongoing lean season compounded by incessant rains in Kerala had hampered the tapping of rubber. In a communication to the Rubber Board, Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association (ATMA) has stated that arrivals from farmers have come to a trickle and with limited stocks with the dealers/sub-dealers, the overall position in the market is quite precarious. Since natural rubber consumption is steady in comparison to seasonal fluctuations in production, tyre companies are left with no option but to import rubber to meet their production requirements. ATMA is concerned that the rubber production in June is likely to have dropped to around 35,000-40,000 tonnes against the Rubber Board's estimated figure of 64,000 tonnes. In June last year, the domestic rubber production was 62,000 tonnes. According to Rajiv Budhraj, Director General ATMA, in view of the high quantity of rubber stock in the country (around 2.6 lakh tonnes) as claimed by the Rubber Board, the scarcity situation should not arise despite such uncertainties in rubber tapping. Of the total natural rubber stock, the dealers and processors have a record level of 1.1 lakh tonnes (41 per cent) and growers have a stock of 86,000 tonnes (32 per cent) at the end of March. "We have, therefore, urged the Rubber Board to intervene and address the NR availability issue", he added. Business Line