

India: Tripura hit by poor rubber productivity

AGARTALA: Tripura registered a much lower productivity in per hectare of land of rubber this time, even in terms of national average, despite being the second largest natural rubber producer in the country. The Rubber Board of India (RBI) blamed aged plantation, unskilled tapers and poor quality of planting materials for the low productivity in Tripura and suggested fast re-plantation in government-run rubber estates. Rubber Board of India (RBI) chairman Sheela Thomas on Thursday said India has been consuming 71 lakh MT of rubber annually against the production of only 9.12 lakh MT. Talking to the media on Thursday, Thomas said while productivity in Kerala was 2000 kg and the national average stood at 1841 kg per hectare of land, productivity in Tripura was around 1141 kg per hectare. She, however, said that India has already attained the first position in productivity, 4th in production and 6th in terms of area under rubber cultivation. The RBI has undertaken an initiative to expand rubber cultivation in both the eastern and Konkan coasts, besides the northeastern states. "Tripura has the potential for rubber cultivation in 76,637 hectare of land. But so far only 61,082 hectares is under cultivation, which is only 8 per cent of the total rubber area," Thomas said, adding that Tripura was producing 37,000 MT latex per annum but consuming only 2,548 MT. Rubber cultivation in Tripura is yielding a better life for the tribal poor, who earlier practiced jhum cultivation, and is also contributing Rs 600 crore to the state's economy. indiatimes.com