National Rubber Policy - Highlights

Why in news?

The Department of Commerce has brought out the National Rubber Policy 2019.

What are the basic characteristics of rubber crop?

- Rubber is made from the latex of a tree called Hevea Brasiliensis, The British established the first rubber plantation in India in 1902 on the banks of the river Periyar in Kerala.
- Rubber tree is a fast growing tall tree acquiring a height of about 20 to 30 meters.
- Rubber tree needs a hot and humid climate with temperature ranging between 25 °C and 35 °C and the annual rainfall of about 300 cm.
- The rainfall should be well-distributed throughout the year.
- Dry spells and low temperature are harmful for rubber trees, daily rainfall followed by bright sunshine is ideal for its growth.
- Deep, rich and well-drained loamy soil, at an elevation of about 400 meters above the sea level, provides ideal conditions for the growth of rubber trees.
- Apart from this cheap and adequate supply of skilled labour is needed for this plantation crop.
- Kerala is the largest producer of natural rubber in India, the main rubber producing districts of Kerala are Kottayam, Kollam, Ernakulam and Kozhikode.
- Other important producers are Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

What are the economic prospects of rubber?

- Till 1910, the demand for natural rubber in the world was limited.
- Later the development of the automobile industry made rubber an important raw material of commerce.
- Now the er is widely used for a variety of purposes, from erasing pencil marks to the manufacturing of tires and tubes and a large variety of industrial products.
- India is the fifth largest rubber-producing country in the world, after Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Brazil.

- India produces about 7 lakh tons of rubber, which is about 4 per cent of the total world's production.
- Kerala alone produces about 6 lakh tons of rubber, which is more than 80 per cent of the total rubber production in India.

What are highlights of National Rubber policy?

- The National Rubber Policy includes several provisions to support the Natural Rubber (NR) production sector and the entire rubber industry value chain.
- The Policy covers new planting and replanting of rubber, support for growers, processing and marketing of natural rubber, labour shortage, grower forums, external trade, Centre-State integrated strategies, research, training, rubber product manufacturing and export, climate change concerns and carbon market
- National Rubber Policy is based on the short term and long term strategies identified by the Task Force constituted on the rubber sector for mitigating problems faced by rubber growers in the country.
- The Task Force held extensive consultations with various stakeholders of rubber sector.
- The policy is expected to benefit natural rubber growers and promote the natural rubber production sector.
- Developmental and research activities for supporting Natural Rubber sector for the welfare of growers are carried out through Rubber Board by implementing the scheme Sustainable and Inclusive Development of Natural Rubber Sector in the Medium Term Framework (MTF).
- The developmental activities include financial and technical assistance for planting, supply of quality planting materials, support for grower forums, training and skill development programme.

Source: PIB

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