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In the April-June quarter, the economy contracted by the steepest ever 24.4%, and 7.3% in the September quarter. However, in October-December it came back in positive territory with 0.4% growth. Indian economy is likely to do better than the projection of 8% shrinkage in the current fiscal as economic activity gathers pace with mild stiffening of pandemic curve and the rollout of vaccines.

The Department of Economic Affairs in its monthly report said the recovery of global output has slowed following the re-imposition of lockdowns in advanced countries amid renewed Covid-19 waves and its emerging variants. However, economic activity in India has gathered

Economy to do better

Steps taken by government led to positive growth

pace with mild stiffening of the Covid-19 curve, failing to deter a steady uptick in consumer sentiment, which has been bolstered by the vaccination drive.

in keeping the pandemic at bay until a critical mass of inoculated population builds up immunity to control the growth of infection in the country.

Positive GDP growth in Q3 of 2020-21 for the first time since the onset of the pandemic adds to the positive sentiment as the economy is set to close the year with activity levels higher than measured in the second advance estimates of GDP.

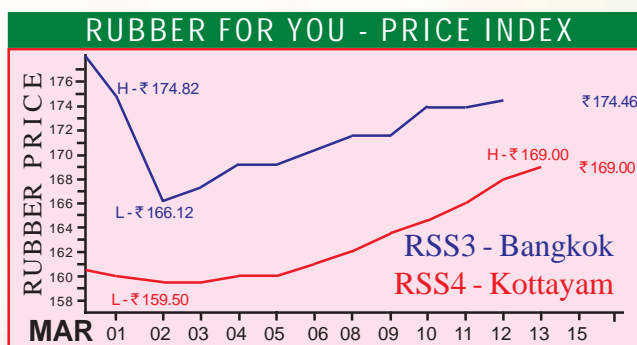
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the fiscal measures taken by the government have resulted in positive

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India continues to avoid the second wave of the pandemic; there has been a surge in cases in eight states underscoring once again the inevitability of social distancing

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growth of 0.4% in the third quarter of the current financial year. The economy is estimated to contract by 8% during 2020-21 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The fiscal measures taken by government during 2020-21 have been calibrated to sustain high spending in the economy and assist in its V-shaped recovery, resulting in a positive GDP growth of 0.4% in third quarter of FY 2020-21. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha.

The gradual unlocking of the economy has eased supply-side disruptions enabling inflation to decline to 4.1% in January 2021. Lower inflation has increased the real purchasing power of the people leaving more money in their hands to spend.

With regard to lockdown, the minister said the government imposed a strict 21 days nationwide lockdown from 25th March 2020, to contain the spread of Covid-19 and ramp up the health infrastructure with a view to saving lives. Astute management of the lockdown and subsequent unlocking along with strengthened health infrastructure was accompanied by roll out of PMGKY and ANB packages that besides saving lives also protected livelihoods and businesses. These measures,

amounting to ₹.29.87 lakh crore - equivalent to 15% of India's GDP, have boosted consumer confidence as their implementation advanced through 2020-21, she said.

The Consumer Confidence Survey, January 2021, of Reserve Bank of India shows that consumer confidence has been increasing since May 2020 in respect of future expectations and since September 2020 in respect of current expectations, minister said.

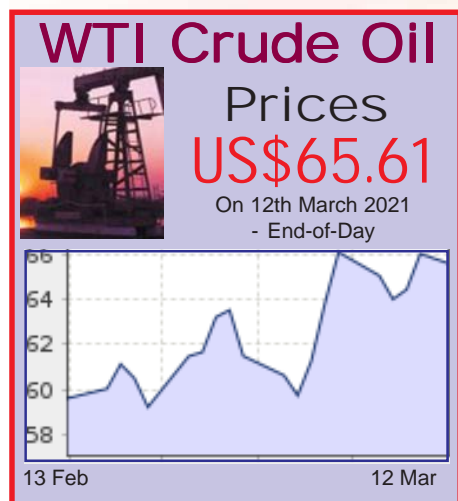
I've been interacting with a lot of industry groups across the board from cement and tyre manufacturers to services sector and they all say their businesses are running to full capacity and still there is more demand and they're struggling to meet that and investing more to expand capacities. Cement, tyre, paints, plastics, finance companies, textile, all had the same thing to say. They are all clearly back in business. I would like to take a cue from the industry and say the message is very positive, Finance

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Minister Sitharaman said during an interaction at the Indian Women's Press Corps.

Oil prices rose on expectations of a recovery in the global economy after the U.S. Senate approved a \$1.9 trillion stimulus bill. The Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries and allies including Russia delivered a shock decision to continue with output cuts that have buoyed the market. The spike in oil prices has focused

attention on how the steady rise in energy costs is threatening to create a drag on the global economic recovery and stoking fears of inflation.

In the nine month period of current fiscal ending 31st December 2020, Centre's excise duty collection from the petroleum sector has already touched ₹.2,35,811 crore mark, much more than what it got in the full financial year 2019-20. At this pace, collections may well cross ₹.3 lakh

crore for the very first time in 2020-21. Last fiscal, the Centre received ₹.2,23,057 crore as excise revenue from the petroleum sector.

According to Reserve Bank's industrial outlook survey conducted in Q3 of 2020-21 has re-affirmed this optimism, with respondents indicating a strengthening of production, order books and employment during the third quarter, driven by easing of lockdowns, re-opening of businesses and improvement in the availability of finance from banks and internal sources. GDP growth is expected to be in positive territory in the second half of 2020-21.

Taskforce recommends to treat natural rubber as agricultural product

Taskforce on the rubber sector constituted by the Central Government has recommended that natural rubber be treated as an agricultural product, the State government informed the Kerala High Court.

The petition was filed by KA Joseph, president of the Indian Rubber Dealers Federation, and others. According to petitioners, the growers had stopped tapping because of declining prices caused by massive imports and increase in the cost of production. The dealers had also incurred heavy losses. In fact, the growers had long been demanding minimum support prices for rubber.

Taskforce also recommended that the Union Ministry of Agriculture should examine the possibility of including the natural rubber under the MSP scheme. These submissions were made in a statement filed in response to a writ petition seeking a directive to fix a minimum support price for natural rubber.

The petition also sought to remove natural rubber from the list of industrial crops and classify it as agricultural products such as cotton, jute, tobacco, etc.

The State Government said that the Rubber Act did not confer any obligation on the State to forward its recommendation to the Centre for arriving at the correct cost of production or fixing MSP for crops at 50% over the cost of production. It was the prerogative of the Centre to fix MSP for the notified crops. However, the State government was implementing the Rubber Production Incentive Scheme from the year 2015 onwards. The State government has requested the Centre to provide financial support to increase the incentive from ₹.150 to ₹.200 per kg and take steps to include it in the proposed livelihood Security Box and re-categorise natural rubber as an agricultural commodity in the various trade agreements.

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Trade Date: 12th March 2021 (Prices in ₹. / kg)

Month	Open	High	Low	Close
March 2021	169.48	170.40	169.00	169.46
April 2021	172.00	173.38	171.00	171.66
May 2021	-	-	-	170.00
June 2021	-	-	-	171.00
July 2021	-	-	-	171.00

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Pre-expiry margin rule for commodities

In a move to strengthen the risk management framework, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) is going to introduce a pre-expiry margin on cash-settled contracts wherein the underlying commodities are deemed to be susceptible to possible near zero or negative prices. The said rule will be effective from 1st April 2021, and is aimed to encourage significant reduction of open interest as the contract approaches the expiry date.

As per the circular, in case of these contracts, pre-expiry margin will be levied during the last five trading days before the expiry date and will increase by 5% each day. ●●

Building blocks for future manufacturing

Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA) Western Region is organising 1st Digital Summit – 'Digital Transformation - Building Blocks for future manufacturing' on 17th March 2021 during 1400 - 1740 hrs, Virtual.

The Digital technology has become one of the key imperatives for auto component suppliers. Industry hardly expected that the 'game changer' ideas such as Application Programming Interfaces, Advance Analytics, Artificial Intelligence, Virtual & Augmented Reality, Blockchain technologies and Internet of Things would usher changes at a much faster pace than ever before. Role of Digital technology has become predominant and its impact will be felt much more comprehensively in years to come. So use the opportunity by using the link for free participation <https://forms.gle/yxjF6GCPAeVY3daw5> ●●

Fresh enquiries lift the prices

The RSS 4 grade rubber closed at ₹.169 per kg on Saturday at Kottayam. The upward trend continued to remain mixed as RSS-5 trading at ₹.165 per kg on fresh enquiries from the non-tyre sector, while the overall volumes were low in a comparatively dull trading session.

Natural rubber prices are expected to sustain recent gains, supported by a range of positive developments in the supply/demand situation

in the international trade arena.

Spot rubber continued to explore further highs, RSS 4 edged up to ₹.169 from ₹.160 per kg since 1st March 2021. In futures, the March delivery improved and settlement at a price of ₹.169.46 per kg on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). RSS 3 flared up to ₹.174.46 per kg at Bangkok. SMR 20 improved to ₹.131.10 a kg at Kuala Lumpur. ●●

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Passenger vehicles sales increased

Low interest rates along with pent-up demand accelerated domestic passenger vehicle sales in February 2021. According to data release by Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), sales of passenger vehicles increased by 17.92% in February 2021.

The total production of passenger vehicles, three wheelers, two wheelers and quadricycle in the month of February 2021 was 22,52,877 units, as against 19,52,911 units in February 2020 marking a growth of 15.36%. Total production of passenger vehicles, three wheelers, two wheelers and quadricycle in April-February 2021 was 1,95,72,565 units as against 2,41,40,891 units in April-February 2020 with a decline of 18.92%.

Passenger vehicles sales was 281,380 units in February 2021, compared to 238,622 units in February 2020, marking a growth of 17.92%. The category includes sub-segments of cars, utility vehicles and vans. Passenger cars sales in the domestic market grew by 4.43%,

while utility vehicles, sales grew by 45.35%, whereas vans offtake went up by 4.34%.

Three wheeler sales were 27,331 units compared to 41,300 units in February 2020 marking a decline of 33.82% growth. Sales of two-wheelers rose 10.20% to 14,26,865 units in the month under review. While wholesale volumes of scooters went up 10% to 4,64,744, that of motorcycles grew 11.47% to 9,10,323 units.

During April-February 2021 period, passenger vehicles sales was 23,35,808 units compared to 2,605,383 units in April-February 2020, down by 10.35%. Three-wheeler sales was 1,84,267 units in April-February 2021 compared to 609,457 units in April-February 2020, down by 69.77 %. Two-wheeler sales was 1,36,22,581 units in April-February 2021, compared to 1,65,49,587 units in April-February 2020, down by 17.69%.

The data does not include sales of BMW, Mercedes, Tata Motors & Volvo Auto, which has stopped reporting wholesale volumes on a monthly basis to SIAM. ●●

One-day training in latex harvest technology

The Rubber Board is organising one-day training in latex harvest technology on 23rd March at Rubber Training Institute, Kottayam, in strict observance of Covid protocol. The training includes Low Frequency Tapping, Controlled Upward Tapping, Application of stimulants, etc.

The training fee is ₹.500 (18% GST+ 1% flood cess extra). SC/ST candidates will be given 50% concession in fee on production of caste certificate. Members of Rubber Producers' Societies will get 25% concession in fee on production of membership certificate. Applications can be sent by email on training@rubberboard.org.in along with the details of bank receipt. ●●

TVS Srichakra launches 11 tyres for replacement market

TVS Srichakra Ltd. a flagship company of \$ 8.5 billion TVS Group headquartered in Madurai, announced the launch of eleven new products for the replacement market which will cater to a wide range of segments including commuter and high-performance bikes as well as electric three-wheelers. The new product line-up includes eight high-performance tyres for motorcycles, two for scooters and one new tyre for e-rickshaw.

TVS Srichakra is manufacturers of TVS Eurogrip tyres and exporters of two, three-wheeler tyres and off-highway tyres. TVS Srichakra has manufacturing facilities in Madurai (Tamil Nadu) and Pantnagar (Uttarakhand) with a production capacity of over 3 million tyres a month. TVS Srichakra's products are available in over 85 countries across the world. ●●

JK Tyre takes products and services to consumer's doorstep

Carmakers have been investing in digital platforms for the various stages of customer engagement, from research and sale to final delivery. Now, tyre manufacturers too have jumped on the bandwagon to cater to the needs of modern consumers. JK Tyre & Industries Ltd. has announced a strategic partnership with Car Dekho and AutoBrix to launch 'JK Tyre Man', an online to offline doorstep tyre delivery-cum-fitment service.

The JK Tyre Man service is currently offered in Bengaluru only as part of its pilot phase but it will be rolled out to various other cities by mid-2021. This

service covers everything from online sales to doorstep delivery-cum-fitment of tyres. This is the result of a strategic partnership with CarDekho, India's biggest automobile platform, and Auto Brix, a leading doorstep auto services provider. Customers will be able to purchase JK tyres from the CarDekho online platform and get delivery and fitment from Auto Brix. ●●

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is not just conveying latest updates as it is today, but it is setting a trend for industry what it will be in the future.

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Buyer seller meet at Madurai

Madurai District Tiny and Small-Scale Industries Association (MADITSSIA) is conducting the sixth edition of its buyer seller meet during 17 - 19 March, said MADITSSIA president B. Muruganantham and chairman of Vendor Development Trade Fair P.J. Bansidhar while addressing press reporters. The meet is organised jointly by MADITSSIA and Union Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. J. Daniel Chellappa, eminent nuclear scientist, will inaugurate the exhibition and deliver the address. S. Anburajan, president, Tamil Nadu Small Scale Industries Association, will deliver the special address.

The recent growth in automobile and light engineering industries has resulted in establishment of new units in Coimbatore and Chennai. Micro and small industries, especially from southern districts, are heading towards Chennai to meet these large establishments. Hence, MADITSSIA has organised this buyer seller meet to connect small units with the large establishments.

Key industries from aerospace, defence, automobile and auto components, industrial equipment and machinery, rubber, textile, hydraulics, infrastructure development, tourism, chemicals and petrochemicals, shipping and cold storage would participate in the meet. Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant, Baba Atomic Research Centre, Neyveli Lignite Corporation Limited, and TVS Sri Chakra Tyres will also participate. ●●

Birla Carbon to hike prices

Birla Carbon will increase its carbon black prices by up to 9%. All shipments made on or after the implementation date are subject to the price increase. The price increase is set to take effect from 19th April 2021. ●●

Car tyre prices to rise

Car tyre prices are about to increase attributing to the surging raw material prices that have shot up. With this price hike, the replacement market will certainly be impacted hard that contributes a large chunk of the total volume sales in the Indian tyre industry.

While replacement market contributes around 60% of the total sales volume of the domestic tyre industry, while around 28% is attributed to the auto manufacturing companies. The prices of the replacement tyre market across categories are going up in March-April 2021 due to the higher prices for the

materials used for manufacturing the tyres. This is the third time the prices of the tyres are being increased by the manufacturers after the lockdown in 2020.

Major tyre manufacturers present in the domestic market have already announced around 3%-8% price hike, depending on segments. According to the tyre manufacturers, the raw materials comprise 62% of the total cost of a tyre. Hence, the price hike is passed on a bit by bit. In Q3 FY21, the tyre manufacturers increased the price by 2% and by the end of March 2021 there will be another 3-4% hike. ●●

Incubation center to help manufacturers create innovative products

Rubber Board has established Rubber Products Incubation Center (RPIC) that will help manufacturers create innovative products from rubber. This will boost the rubber manufacturing industry and promise better returns to rubber growers.

The incubation center endeavors to create a vibrant and strong manufacturing industry for rubber

products. The center has designed a cost-effective formula to manufacture household gloves from new raw materials. Another innovation is the substitution of root trainer cups made of plastic. These cups are used for growing rubber plants in nursery. An innovation that has been proposed is the manufacture of rubber tiles from nitrile gloves that have been discarded. ●●

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Needs to combat cost inflation

Tyre demand remains robust due to strong sentiment in rural centres and increased preference for personal mobility are among the drivers. The domestic tyre industry has also benefitted from import restrictions in place since August 2020.

While raw material cost inflation continues to pose a threat to margins' of tyre companies. Prices of key raw materials such as natural rubber and other crude derivatives continue to rise. Raw material consumption cost has increased by more than 17% sequentially in 4QFY21, and will likely rise by over 4% for 1QFY22 and in order to maintain healthy margins, tyre companies would have to hike prices in replacement segment by 8-10% by 1QFY22.

Investors should note that tyre companies posted impressive results in the third quarter of 2020-21 with strong volumes growth. The replacement market, which contributes over 60% of domestic tyre production, aided this growth. Further, the managements of key tyre makers indicated that they have taken prices hikes of 2-3% across product categories. Strong replacement demand will help tyre companies to pass through a major portion of price increase and thereby arrest a sharp erosion in margins. ●●

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BALKRISHNA INDS.	1584.85	1599.15	1627.55
BASF INDIA	1898.70	2231.40	2256.45
BATA INDIA	1470.00	1499.90	1504.10
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HIMADRI CHEMICAL	45.45	45.95	45.60
INDAG RUBBER	98.30	96.15	101.30
JK TYRE INDS.	126.45	124.00	122.90
KESORAM INDS.	78.40	83.85	78.30
KHADIM INDIA	164.70	176.40	173.35
M.M. RUBBER	59.60	56.80	55.65
MAHALAXMI RUBTECH	41.25	40.80	40.55
MODI RUBBER	157.50	200.90	172.35
MRF LTD.	89077.70	87604.70	88830.30
NOCIL LTD.	171.35	178.80	182.60
ORIENTAL CARBON	885.00	892.20	994.10
PHILIP CARBON	197.65	210.85	209.25
PIX TRANSMISSION	348.85	340.05	339.20
PTL LTD.	41.05	41.00	40.65
RELAXO FOOTWARE	837.70	840.60	852.80
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VAMSHI RUBBER LTD.	NA	17.80	18.70
YASHO INDUSTRIES	232.00	254.80	242.60

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According to Association of Natural Rubber Producing Countries (ANRPC), the outlook of world production of natural rubber is likely to fall 12.4%, y-o-y, to 897,000 tonnes in February 2021. The world consumption of natural rubber is estimated to recover at 47.5%, y-o-y, to 1.103 million tonnes during the same month.

As a result of favourable market fundamental amid the seasonal wintering in most natural rubber producing countries, it has supported the upward trend. The rubber prices also tracked the similar trend of crude oil prices in February 2021 which posted a 13.7% growth averaged at US\$62.28 per barrel while comparing to January 2021.

Despite the global economic recovery is

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CURRENCY EXCHANGE RATE

Currency	On 1st Mar INR/Unit	On 13th Mar INR/Unit
Chinese (Yuan)	11.36	11.18
Europe (Euro)	88.93	86.84
Indonesian (Rupiah)	0.0051	0.0050
Japanese (Yen)	0.69	0.66
Malaysian (Ringgit)	18.17	17.65
Singapore (Dollar)	55.25	54.08
Sri Lanka (Rupee)	0.37	0.36
Taiwan (Dollar)	2.64	2.57
Thailand (Baht)	2.41	2.36
US (Dollar)	73.68	72.69
Vietnam (Dong)	0.0032	0.0031

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driven by the positive economic data in US and China, there are other efforts

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from regional economic cooperation which may boost the economic activities within the region such as Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) is considering of digital vaccine passport while European Union proposed to have Digital Green

Pass to accommodate the safety movement around or within the region, respectively.

In the block rubber market, the average price of SMR-20 and STR-20 have recorded a 6.1% and 4.7% growth, respectively. The similar observation shared in the rubber sheets market where average price of RSS-3 in Bangkok recorded an increase of 3.6% to US\$2.25 per kg and RSS-4 at Kottayam market averaged at US\$2.14 per kg in February 2021 against last month.

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Drones used to fight rubber leaf fungus

Drone technology is being used for the first time in Sri Lanka to control the leaf fungus disease named Pestalotiopsis in rubber plantations.

Under the project, State Minister Kanaka Herath said it had been planned to spray fungal controlling chemicals using drones, which is designed especially for agricultural purposes. The fungal disease that infects rubber plantations should be brought under control promptly otherwise it would be a huge threat to the entire rubber industry. By using drone technology as well as modern pest control methods they would be able to control the fungal disease quickly and prevent it from spreading to other areas.

The pilot project of spraying chemicals with drones was carried out at the Panawatta Estate in Yatiyantota recently under the supervision of Rubber Research Institute (RRI) officials.

Applying chemicals onto the leaves using drones is rather effective than applying chemicals from the ground as there are several practical issues. It is practically difficult to carry heavy chemical spraying machines throughout the plantation as most of the rubber plantations are on hilly areas, State Minister Herath said.

The disease was reported in 2017 in Indonesia and 2018 in Malaysia. If more than 50% of leaves fall off, rubber taping for rubber latex cannot be carried out. In such occasions it is reported a yield drop and on average, it is estimated that there will be a 30% reduction in yields. RRI would study the productivity of the pilot project and make extensive use of drone technology to prevent the disease, Rubber Research Institute Deputy Director Dr. Priyani Seneviratne said. ■■

Technology for detecting tyre wear

Technology that detects tyre wear has been developed by Sumitomo Rubber Industries. This breakthrough technological advance takes SRI's proprietary "Sensing Core" technology to the next step. Developed through extensive research by SRI on the dynamic behaviour of tyres, this innovative technology provides the

ability to detect various tyre-related conditions, including pressure, load and road conditions, as well as detect tyre wear. This technology not only warns drivers of the wear condition of their tyres, but also provides centralised management of tyre conditions through cloud computing technologies. ■■

Govt looking at ways to protect commodity sector

The Malaysian Meteorological Department has forecast that the hot weather would last until mid April. The Plantation Industries and Commodities Ministry will seek the best ways to ensure the incomes of industry players such as rubber and oil palm smallholders are not affected amid the current hot season.

While addressing the reporters, Deputy minister, Datuk Seri Wee Jeck Seng, said this was necessary given that the commodity industry was a major source of income for the country. Moreover, many smallholders are involved in rubber and palm. So the ministry is very concerned and stress on taking necessary steps to assist them in going through this kind of weather.

Tanjung Piai, Member of Parliament said for the rubber sector, among the steps was providing subsidies so that the price was not lower than the floor (farm-gate) price of RM2.50 per kilogram. If the market price is lower, the government will subsidise the smallholders to ensure the stability of their income. ■■

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Programmes to continue empowering rubber industry

Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities (MPIC) and the Malaysian Rubber Board (MRB) have planned various programmes and initiatives to continue empowering Malaysia's rubber industry through several platforms.

In the latest development, MPIC through MRB held a Rubber Forum 2021 to share information and engage in interaction sessions with various stakeholders. Latest issues and problems were discussed to strengthen the nation's rubber industry in both the upstream and downstream sectors.

Among the government's plans shared with the participants were related to Rubber Industries Transformation Project with an allocation of RM6 million, involving production of rubber crip compared with rubber scrap which will give value-added income to the smallholders. Smallholders who are interested to take part in this project can set up rubber cooperatives in their respective areas in preparation for their

participation. The development of the east coast latex corridor with an allocation of RM16 million will be implemented this year, targeting an increase of 5,000 tonnes to 10,000 tonnes of latex annually, with a contribution of up to 30% to the smallholders' monthly income, Plantation Industries and Commodities Minister Datuk Dr Mohd Khairuddin Aman Razali said in a statement. ■■

SGX acquires stake in HeveaConnect

Singapore Exchange (SGX), through its wholly owned subsidiary Asian Gateway Investments, has invested SGD 1.99 million (USD 1.5 million) in rubber trading platform HeveaConnect for a 9.09% stake. The acquisition is aimed at accelerating the digitalisation of the natural rubber industry.

HeveaConnect is a digital marketplace for sustainably produced natural rubber and provides global market participants with integrated supply chain, traceability and sustainability data. The investment will bolster HeveaConnect's capability as a price discovery platform for sustainable natural rubber, in line with SGX's recent focus on sustainability.

Singapore is considered a hub for the global natural rubber trade, with SGX's Singapore Commodity Exchange (SICOM) market being widely recognised as the world's price discovery centre for natural rubber. As part of SGX's investment, SICOM futures prices will be made available on HeveaConnect's platform, to facilitate physical rubber spot and long-term price discovery against SICOM benchmarks. ■■

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Inter-Institutional co-ordination committee to resolve rubber industry issues

Sri Lankan Cabinet nod has been received to appoint an Inter-institutional co-ordination committee comprising of industry players engaged in raw rubber manufacturing and rubber-based products as a joint endeavour to develop the sector while solving current issues in the sector.

Rubber exports increased in two months

Vietnam's rubber exports during January-February 2021 doubled in both volume and value compared to the same period of 2020. The exports reached 320,000 tonnes, a jump of 89.9% from a year earlier, while value totaled US\$516 million. China was Vietnam's top importer, purchasing 72.7% of rubber and it was followed by India (4.6%) and Republic of Korea (2.7%), according to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD).

The MARD's Agro Processing and Market Development Authority forecast the price will rise further on the back of short supply and surges in international benchmark prices for natural rubber on Japan's Osaka Exchange (OSE). The US's approval of a US\$ 1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package and expected growth of auto sales in China in 2021 also provide a bright outlook for the global rubber market in the time ahead.

The Cabinet of Ministers approved a proposal presented by the Minister of Plantation, Dr. Ramesh Pathirana to appoint an 'Inter-institutional coordination committee for the development of rubber cultivation and industries'.

The committee is expected to provide a platform to solve issues in the sector through discussion, and it is also expected to provide policy recommendations to the government.

Department of Government Information stated that the establishment of such a coordinating committee consolidating planters and industrialists would be an encouraging move to develop the sector as a joint endeavour.

Industrial rubber market to grow

Industrial rubber industry is witnessing growth due to its expanding application area, technological advancements in the industry, and its growing demand in the Asia Pacific.

The global demand for industrial rubber is projected to witness moderate growth of 4.6% between 2017 and 2022. The industrial rubber market is expected to reach US\$ 33.82 billion by 2022 in terms of value. The global industrial rubber market is projected to reach 16,115.3 kilotons by 2022. This growth of the market can be attributed to the robust economic outlook for the Asia Pacific, and the increasing motor vehicle production and sales across the globe.

Exports of rubber products surged

Malaysia's rubber products exports surged to a record of RM40.96 billion in 2020 due to the spike in exports of latex goods mainly medical devices such as gloves and catheters due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The latex goods sector, which comprises mainly medical devices such as gloves and catheters, made up 90% of the total rubber products exports in 2020. It recorded a jump of 81% recorded in 2019.

In a statement, Malaysian Rubber Council (MRC) chief executive officer Brandon Chan said last year's exports surged by 75.6% from 2019. The strong performance in exports was contributed by the spike in exports of latex goods which posted a y-o-y growth of 95.3% last year. Rubber gloves alone made up 86% of the country's rubber products exports. Exports revenue from the rubber gloves industry reached RM35.3 billion, an increase of 103%. Globally, Malaysia has been supplying more than 60% of the world demand for rubber gloves and the Malaysian Rubber Council (MRC) estimates the share to expand to 68% in 2020.

US was the largest market for Malaysian rubber products and exports increased by 79% from RM7.25 billion in 2019 to RM12.96 billion in 2020. The other key markets which increased their imports from Malaysia for the rubber products were the EU by 101%, Japan (64%), United Kingdom (157%) and China (82.4%), said Brandon Chan.

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Continental sells 6 retread locations to Conlan Tire

Continental and BestDrive LLC have announced the sale of six company-owned BestDrive retread locations to lifelong ContiLifeCycle dealer Conlan Tire. This decision aligns with Continental's strategy of supporting the growth of its independent ContiLifeCycle dealers and ensuring maximum support of fleet customers across the United States, while positioning BestDrive for continued growth in other regions.

Conlan Tire has been part of the ContiLifeCycle network since the dealer was founded in March 2017. The sale includes one retread plant in Dallas suburb Grand Prairie, Texas, as well as commercial centers in San Antonio, Houston, and Longview, Texas; Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; and Little Rock, Arkansas.

This sale is not indicative of any plan to exit the retail business. This decision strengthens Continental's presence in a key region and gives BestDrive the flexibility to expand into other areas of the country. Continental fleet customers across the U.S. will benefit from this move. We are excited about our growth and expansion with Conlan Tire, confirmed Continental's Tom Fanning, head of U.S. market for Truck Tyres. ■■

The China, Japan, and South Korea cleanroom disposable gloves market was valued at \$481.1 million in 2018, and is expected to reach \$919.1 million by 2026, registering a CAGR of 8.3% from 2019 to 2026.

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Allbirds to make shoes using plant-based leather

The American footwear brand Allbirds is set to introduce what it claims is the first leather alternative entirely made from plant-based ingredients, which is now set to be turned into footwear that will hit shelves by December 2021.

The compostable material, called Plant Leather has a carbon impact that is 40 times lower than animal leather and produces 17 times fewer carbon emissions than plastic-based synthetic leather. The material contains natural rubber, vegetable oil, citric acid and fillers like cork and rice husks plus natural pigments.

Despite the rising number of leather like products made from plants, Natural Fiber Welding (NFW) claims that rival materials often required plastic coatings or additives to ensure durability. It claims it is the world's first 100% natural plant-based leather alternative. News of the partnership with NFW comes after Allbirds invested \$2 million in the startup at the end of last year to help it ramp up production and reduce prices. ■■

Trelleborg acquires leading supplier of composite hoses

Trelleborg has, through its Trelleborg Industrial Solutions business area, signed an agreement and finalised the acquisition of the Dutch company, Gutteling Group BV - headquartered in Rotterdam, Netherlands.

Gutteling develops and sells composite hoses to the chemical industry and is the market leader in hoses for Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) ship-to-ship transfer. The acquisition complements Trelleborg's industrial hose, and specifically, composite hose, offering. Composite hoses are mainly used for aggressive chemicals, such as chlorine, sulfuric acid, biofuels and LNG.

Trelleborg is a world leader in engineered polymer solutions that seal, damp and protect critical applications in demanding environments. Its innovative solutions accelerate performance for customers in a sustainable way. ■■

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Cabot launches E2C Product

Cabot Corporation, a global specialty chemicals and performance materials company, headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, recently announced the launch of a new Engineered Elastomer Composites (E2C) product for use in industrial rubber products. The latest product E2C DZ8650 forms part of the Durability series of solutions, which intends to lower in-field failures and maximise operational uptime.

DZ8650 is formulated to deliver breakthrough improvements in erosion and wet abrasion resistance, as well as mechanical strength in mining rubber applications including slurry pumps, hydrocyclones and rubber pipes.

The product DZ8650 can be combined in the current production process of industrial rubber manufacturer without any additional capital spending. This will facilitate producers to reform their business model by improving performance, shortening development cycles and lower operational barriers to new product commercialisation. ■■

Goodyear announces leadership changes

Following the company's recent announcement of its plans to acquire Cooper Tire, The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company announced that Ryan Patterson, currently president of its Asia Pacific business unit, will lead the integration effort as senior vice president, Business Integration. Nathaniel Madarang, currently managing director of Goodyear China, will succeed Patterson as president of Goodyear Asia Pacific. Both appointments are effective immediately. ■■

Chip shortage to drag on for months

Continental expects the auto industry's microchip shortage to drag on for months. The negative impact will be felt especially in the first quarter. The general situation will ease in the course of the second quarter. However, in some areas the shortage is expected to drag on for the entire year, CEO Nikolai Setzer said.

While Continental said it expects 2021

sales and profit margin to grow despite expected additional costs due to chip shortages. ■■

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Export & Import of Rubber & Articles thereof Under Chapter 40

(In Lakh ₹.)

During April-December 2020

HS Code	Commodity	Export	Import
4001	NATURAL RUBBER BALATA GUTTAPERCHA ETC & SMLR NATURAL GUMS IN PRMRY FORMS/IN PLTS SHTS/STRP	8,860.78	309,058.27
4002	SYNTHETIC RUBBER & FACTICE DERIVED FORM OILS, IN PRIMARY FORMS OR IN PLATES, SHEETS OR STRIP; MIXTURES OF ANY PRO	58,186.97	387,125.54
4003	RECLAIMED RUBBER IN PRIMARY FORMS OR IN PLATES, SHEETS OR STRIP	29,479.51	297.33
4004	WASTE, PARINGS AND SCRAP OF RUBBER (OTHER THAN HARD RUBBER) & POWDERS & GRANULES OBTAINED THEREFROM	555.88	7,401.66
4005	COMPDED RUBBER UNVULCNSD IN PRMRY FORMS/IN PLATES SHEETS/STRIP	13,666.81	82,283.46
4006	OTHER FORMS (FOR EXAMPLE, RODS, TUBES & PROFILE SHAPES) & ARTICLES (FOR EXAMPLE, DISCS & RINGS), OF UNVULCANISED RUBBER	2,065.79	847.28
4007	VULCANISED RUBBER THREAD & CORD	7,314.12	2,893.15
4008	PLATS,SHTS,STRP,RODS & PROFILE SHAPES OF VULCNSD RUBBER OTHR THN HARD RUBBER	52,385.31	12,983.50
4009	TUBES, PIPES AND HOSES, OF VULCANISED RUBBER OTHER THAN HARD RUBBER, WITH OR WITHOUT THEIR FITTINGS (FOR EXAMPLE, CNVYR TRNSMSSN BLTS/BLTNG	70,848.90	67,592.14
4010	OF VULCNSD RUBBER	64,588.30	43,311.54
4011	NEW PNEUMATIC TYRES, OF RUBBER	968,481.44	94,314.72
4012	RETREADED OR USED PNEUMATIC TYRES OF RUBBER, SOLID OR CUSHION TYRES, TYRE TREADS & TYRE FLAPS, OF RUBBER	23,152.36	3,584.85
4013	INNER TUBES, OF RUBBER	39,863.53	776.60
4014	HYGNC/PHRMCTL ARTCLS (INCL TEATS) OF VALCNSD RUBBER OTHER THAN HARD RUBBER WTH/WITHOUT FITTINGS OF HARD RUBBER	34,149.31	11,798.50
4015	ARTCL OF APARL AND CLOTHING ACCESSORIES (INCL. GLOVES, MITTENS & MITTS) FOR ALL PURPOSE OF VULCANISED RUBBER NOT HARD	47,269.40	127,781.19
4016	OTHER ARTICLES OF VULCANISED RUBBER OTHER THAN HARD RUBBER	222,626.26	277,985.05
4017	HARD RUBBER (FOR EXAMPLE, EBONITE) IN ALL FORMS, INCLUDING WASTE & SCRAP; ARTICLES OF HARD RUBBER	787.04	1,944.38
Total		1644,281.70	1431,979.16

(Source: Dept of Commerce)

INDIAN RUBBER POSITION

During April - October

(Metric Tonnes)

Rubber	2020	2019
Production		
Natural Rubber (NR)		
Ribbed Smoked Sheet	217665	257630
Solid Block Rubber	64655	62605
Latex Concentrates (drc)	38890	40360
Others	9790	12405
Total	331000	373000

Synthetic Rubber (SR)

Styrene Butadiene	121521	145200
Poly Butadiene(BR)	74164	74475
Others	27820	6379
Total	223505	226054

Total NR & SR **554505** **599054**

Consumption*

Natural Rubber (NR)

Ribbed Smoked Sheet	251495	281700
Solid Block Rubber	237655	310430
Latex Concentrates (drc)	40310	49170
Others	12450	14820
Total	541910	656120

Synthetic Rubber (SR)

Styrene Butadiene (SBR)	163435	210950
Poly Butadiene(BR)	88345	107845
Others	51410	65315
Total	303190	384110

Total NR & SR **845100** **1040230**

*: indigenous and imported

Reclaimed Rubber (RR)

Production @	70230	80950
Consumption	69870	81035
Stock with Manufacturers (End of October)	14565	13220

@: indigenous purchase by manufacturers

Import / Export

Import (p)

Natural Rubber	219129	302340
Synthetic Rubber	141223	185255
Total NR & SR	360352	487595

Export (p)

Natural Rubber	2703	6324
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p:provisional

(Source: Rubber Board)



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Day Session As of 12th March 2021

Trade Date: 12th March 2021

(Prices in yen / kilogram)

Month	Open	High	Low	Last	Change%	Volume	Settlement
March 2021	272.2	276.0	272.0	273.9	+2.4	106	273.9
April 2021	274.9	275.5	273.8	274.3	+2.3	31	274.3
May 2021	268.0	268.4	266.4	267.5	+3.6	39	267.5
June 2021	270.5	272.0	269.5	269.6	+2.6	169	269.7
July 2021	272.8	275.0	271.4	273.7	+1.9	305	273.7
August 2021	276.4	278.2	274.3	276.0	+1.3	1,104	276.0

Exhibition & Conference SCHEDULE

GRTE 2021

17 - 19 March 2021
At BITEC, Bangkok,
Thailand.

ChinaPlas 2021

13 - 16 April 2021
At Shenzhen WE&C Center,
PR China.

International Rubber Glove Conference & Exhibition

11 - 13 August 2021
Kuala Lumpur Con. Centre,
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

China International Tire Expo

16 - 18 August 2021
At Shanghai WEE & CC,
Shanghai, China.

INAPA 2021

25 - 27 August 2021
At JIExpo Kemayoran,
Jakarta, Indonesia.

Tyre & Rubber Indonesia

25 - 27 August 2021
At JIExpo Kemayoran,
Jakarta, Indonesia.

Rubber & Tyre Vietnam 2021

26 - 28 August 2021
At Saigon Exhn. & Convn. Center,
Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

RubberTech China 2021

15 - 17 September 2021
At Shanghai New Intl. Expo Centre,
Shanghai, China.

Latin Tyre Expo & Latin Auto Parts Expo

6 - 8 October 2021
At Amador Convention Center,
Panama City, Panama.

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