

DUTY-FREE IMPORT OF RUBBER SOUGHT

AGE CORRESPONDENT

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Rubber associations have decried the move to bring branded natural rubber exports under the market-linked focus product scheme (MLFPS) of the commerce ministry and the traders have sought duty-free import of natural rubber citing industry shortage.

Earlier this week, rubber was included as the 147th item in the MLFPS scheme that provides an export incentive of 2 per cent for products.

"Even as there is a deficit in the domestic

requirement for natural rubber (NR), how can the government allow exports," asks Vinod Simon, president of all India rubber industries association (AIRIA).

The net deficit of NR in the country, as per rubber board estimates, is 75,000 tonnes for this year against the total availability of 2.4 lakh tonnes.

"As per industry estimates, available rubber is about 1.9 lakh tonnes and the deficit is around 1.1 lakh tonnes. Hence, procuring raw material through duty-free imports are a must," he added.