

# Natural rubber import up 32% in April-Nov

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Kochi, 19 December

Import of natural rubber rose 32.5 per cent to 153,855 tonnes during April-November from 115,885 tonnes in the corresponding period last year, thanks to poor local production and the lower price tag in the global markets.

In November alone, 22,748 tonnes were imported against 16,125 tonnes in the year-ago period. Imports will be on the rise in the coming months as the SMR-20 grade rubber, which is almost equivalent to the local RSS-4 grade, is much cheaper in the Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur markets.

Today, Kuala Lumpur quoted ₹159 for a kg of SMR-20,

while RSS-4 in India costs ₹163. So, according to experts, imports in the current financial year might cross 250,000 tonnes.

The global market is now in a bearish mode as demand is sluggish across the world. Imports of China, the world's largest consumer of natural rubber, are likely to be lower by 15-20 per cent this year.

According to N Radhakrishnan, a leading rubber trader and former president of the Cochin Rubber Merchants Association, the rubber market would be in a bearish mode for the next three-four months. He said the price was likely to drop as supply would be on the increase during the winter season.