

Rubber output increases 7.4% in March

Mumbai, Apr 19: India's natural rubber production in March rose 7.4% on year to 54,400 tonne, the state-run Rubber Board said in a statement on Tuesday, as record high prices prompted farmers to increase tapping.

The south Asian country's production during April 2010 to March 2011 stood at 8,61,950 tonne, up 3.7% on year, it said.

"Weather was conducive for tapping in March. In April also production is likely to be on higherside. We got rainfall in the past few days. It should boost tapping in coming days," said Ibrahim Jalal, treasurer, Indian Rubber Dealers Federation (IRDF).

The world's fourth biggest producer's consumption rose by 3.6% to 81,500 tonne in March from 78,650 tonne in the year-ago period, the Rubber Board said.

Consumption during April-March stood at 9,49,205 tonne, up 2% on year, as tyre makers stepped up purchases to cater to ballooning tyre demand from the auto sector.

Imports halved in March to 6,200 tonne, while during April-March they stood at 1,77,482 tonne, largely steady compared to 1,76,756 tonne a year ago.

The benchmark May rubber contract on India's National Multi-Commodity Exchange (NMCE) was trading 1.3% lower at ₹23,700 per 100 kg at 1004 GMT on Tuesday. *Reuters*