



In conversation with
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Rubber Industry Bounces Amidst Challenges

What have been the highlights of the year 2012 for Rubber Industry in India

Rubber industry is largely fragmented with MSMEs accounting for a large proportion. It is critical to bring the industry stakeholders at one platform and apprise them of the latest developments in technology, product innovation, quality issues, emerging trends etc. Accordingly, this year we decided to hold four National Rubber Conferences across four regions on the theme "New Challenge and Opportunities for Rubber Industry". Two such conferences have been already held in New Delhi and Chennai and the one in Mumbai is slated for early November. The Rubber Conferences have generated considerable interest and have largely helped in sharpening competitiveness of the industry. Another significant development during the current year has been setting up of the Rubber Skill Development Centre (RSDC) under the aegis of National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC).

How significant is the launch of Rubber Skill Development Centre

Availability of skilled manpower is an issue faced by the entire rubber sector. AIRIA with full support from ATMA (Automotive Tyre Manufacturers Association) took the lead in coordinating with NSDC for setting up a sector skill council. RSDC will help Rubber industry in meeting the entire value chain's

requirements of trained manpower on a sustained basis.

What is the new line-up of activity for the industry

We will begin the New Year with our bi-annual event – India Rubber Expo (IRE) at Mumbai. IRE 2013, supported by Rubber Board, IRMRA, CAPEXIL, IRI, ACS (USA), DKG (Germany) etc, is poised to be the largest exclusive rubber show in the world. For the first time ever, we are holding a concurrent Tyre Show. Also IRE will have a unique zone dedicated to SMEs. Lanxess is the main sponsor of the event.

As you assume charge of the Rubber Industry body, what new plans are on the anvil

Foremost, we propose to form a youth chapter in the rubber industry called Young Turf within the regions. This will garner the support of the younger generation in the affairs of the industry and will also help in succession planning for the future leaders in the association.

Notwithstanding challenges, India Rubber Industry is touching new benchmarks in excellence. The industry has been defying the growth statistics by returning a far better growth than exhibited in India's GDP. For instance, overall exports of rubber goods increased from Rs 8184 crore in 2010-11 to Rs 11130 crore in 2011-12 showing an increase of 36%. We need to create brand equity for Indian Rubber Industry worldwide and that is going to be another focus area. We have already initiated this process by

forming alliances with international counterparts such as American Chemical Society.

Technological upgradation is an important area and accordingly a separate technical committee has been formed under AIRIA to address concerns of the Indian Rubber Industry related to R&D and publish an annual book on technological developments in the field of rubber. The director of IRMRA has consented to be the convener of this committee.

Another activity that we are seriously pursuing is forming a common platform for all Rubber related bodies across disciplines for better synergy, exchange of knowledge and liaison with policy makers on issues related to growth of industry. The new managing committee consisting **Mr Mohinder Gupta**, Sr Vice President and **Mr R. Ramachandran** Vice President and myself is committed to realize the vision of Indian Rubber Industry as the largest Rubber Industry in the world.



Ms. Sheela Thomas, Chairperson, Rubber Board, inaugurating RSDC office. Also seen Ms Anupama Giri, CEO, RSDC; Mr. Vinod Simon, Chairman, RSDC; Mr. Dilip Chenoy, CEO & MD, NSDC and Mr. Mohinder Gupta, Sr VP AIRIA