

**WATER SOLUBLE MERCAPTAN FOR USE IN THE CREPE RUBBER INDUSTRY**

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Latex crepe from Sri Lanka has earned a reputation for its high quality. The pure white colour and the high level of purity have been achieved by: (a) Fractionation of latex before coagulation to remove the yellow fraction; (b) Use of a chemical bleaching agent, to bleach the remainder of the yellow fraction.

Since crepe rubber is manufactured from latices of mixed clones, removal of a fraction in itself is insufficient to make good quality crepes, bleaching is also essential.

The traditional bleaching agent (RPA 3) has now been replaced by new bleaching agents containing tolyl mercaptan as the basic ingredient. However, a large number of disadvantages have been pin pointed by the users, in using this substance. An attempt was made to chemically modify the basic active ingredient tolyl mercaptan in bleaching agents, to make it ionic and hence water soluble.

The alkaline metal salt of the thiol was made by dissolving tolyl mercaptan powder in caustic soda solution, and the properties of this substance was compared with that of ordinary tolyl mercaptan. It was found that it had properties which were in certain instances superior to the ordinary tolyl mercaptan, while it is very much more economical to use in crepe manufacture compared to ordinary tolyl mercaptan.