

Tokyo futures lower as yen rises (April 3)

TOKYO, April 3 (Reuters) – Key TOCOM rubber futures edged lower early on Tuesday as market participants took profits citing a stronger yen, though overall sentiment remained underpinned by falling supplies as well as strong economic data in the United States and China.

FUNDAMENTALS * The key Tokyo Commodity Exchange rubber contract for September delivery eased 0.4 yen at 330.7 yen per kg as of 0030GMT. * New car sales in Japan surged in March from a disaster-hit low last year, while global sales for South Korea's Hyundai Motor Co also grew as brisk overseas sales made up for a sharp drop at home. * Brazil's manufacturing sector expanded in March for the third consecutive month, albeit at a slower pace, fueling hopes of an economic rebound into 2012 after a flurry of government stimulus measures, a survey showed on Monday. * Rubber supply in Thailand and Malaysia, the biggest and the third-biggest producers respectively, is falling due to the wintering-dry season that cuts latex supply. The dry season normally last for a few months and ends by mid-April. MARKET NEWS

* The dollar last traded at 82.12 yen, close to a three-week trough of 81.82 hit on Friday, and strategists said that could push investors to take profits in a market that has risen more than 19 percent this year. * Oil prices rose a second day on Monday, gaining 2 percent as loading delays for North Sea crude cargoes added to concerns about global supply disruptions and as supportive U.S. * Japan's Nikkei average opened down 0.27 percent on Tuesday. DATA EVENTS * The following data is expected on Tuesday: - 0400 U.S.Total Vehicle Sales Mar - 0430 Australia RBA cash rate Apr 2012 - 1145 U.S. ICSC chain stores yy Weekly - 1200 Brazil Industrial output yy Feb 2012 - 2030 U.S. API weekly crude stocks Mar 30 - 2030 U.S. API weekly dist. stocks Mar 30 - 2030 U.S. API weekly gasoline stk Mar 30 (Reporting by Yuko Inoue; Editing by Sugita Katyal)