

Tokyo rubber futures edge down in cautious trade before China data (April 23)

TOKYO, April 23 (Reuters) – Tokyo rubber futures edged lower on Tuesday as the yen's weakening paused and as investors cautiously awaited Chinese manufacturing data due out during the morning session.

FUNDAMENTALS* The benchmark Tokyo Commodity Exchange rubber contract for September delivery was down 0.4 percent at 249.8 yen per kg as of 0032 GMT.* The benchmark contract earlier fell as low as 249.1 yen, still above a five-month low of 242.6 yen marked last week.* It was the last trading day for the nearby April contract.* China's flash manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) data is due at 0145 GMT.* Crude rubber inventories at Japanese ports fell by 131 tonnes in the 10 days to April 10, to 15,668 tonnes, after peaking at a six-year high in the previous 10-day period, industry data showed on Monday.* China imported 631,187 tonnes of natural rubber in the first three months of 2013, up 31.7 percent from a year earlier, customs-trade data showed on Monday.* In Thailand, the world's biggest rubber producer, farmers usually resume tapping trees for the commodity in late April after a one-month break during the dry season.

MARKET NEWS* The dollar was little changed from late U.S. levels after failing to crack the 100-yen level in the previous session.* Japan's Nikkei share average eased in early trade on Tuesday as the yen's weakness paused, prompting investors to lock in some of the gains after the index hit a nearly five-year closing high in the previous session.* Brent crude futures rose for a third straight session to top \$100 a barrel on Monday, lifted by gains in the U.S. stock market.

DATA EVENTS* The following data is expected on Tuesday: (Time in GMT)0145 China HSBC Manufacturing Flash PMI0645 France Business climate0658 France Markit Manufacturing Flash PMI0728 Germany Markit Manufacturing Flash PMI0758 Euro zone Markit Manufacturing Flash PMI0800 Italy Consumer confidence1145 U.S. ICSC weekly chain store sales1300 U.S. FHFA home price index1400 U.S. New home sales1400 U.S. Richmond Fed manufacturing, services2030 U.S. API weekly crude stocks (Reporting by Risa Maeda; Editing by Chris Gallagher)Reuters