

## 《Japan Feb. consumer spending bounces back, outlook uncertain》

Japanese consumer spending in February has risen for the first time in half a year, but slowing wage growth and worries about overseas economies still keep the government under pressure to boost the economy.

Household spending rose 1.2 percent in February from a year earlier, as shown by government data on Tuesday. That beat a market forecast of a decline, and was much better than January's 3.1 percent annual drop. Separate data showed retail sales rising only half a percent in February from a year ago, less than the median forecast of a 1.7 percent annual increase.

Economists at Mizuho Research Institute said they expect consumer spending to rise further, but the gains will be very moderate given low demand for durable goods. Analysts now are expecting the Japanese government to launch a new round of stimulus spending and delay a sales tax increase scheduled for next year.

