

Japan's new vehicle market bounced by 3.2% to 366,155 units in April from 354,747 units a year earlier, according to registration data released by the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association.



The increase follows six months of declining sales from relatively high year-earlier levels after the country posted its longest period of uninterrupted economic growth since the boom years of the 1980s in the fourth quarter of last year.

Despite last month's moderate rebound in vehicle sales, economic growth looks to have peaked in the current cycle – with business confidence beginning to ebb in the first quarter.

Sales in the first four months of the year were still 1.3% lower at 1,906,848 units from 1,932,496 units a year earlier, with passenger vehicle sales falling by 1.8% to 1,608,937 units while truck sales increased by 1.4% to 292,330 units. Medium and heavy-duty bus sales were 11.5% lower at 5,581 units after particularly strong growth in previous years.

Toyota's sales fell by 7.8% to 529,531 units in the four-month period, while second-placed Honda's saw its volume rise by 1.5% to 271,480 units, Nissan 242,731 units (-2.8%); Suzuki 256,622 units (+2.8%); Daihatsu 236,876 units (+6.5%); and Mazda 84,815 units (+3.1%).