

U.S. consumer confidence drops to lowest level in 9 months

NEW YORK, Aug. 28 (Xinhua) -- The U.S. consumer confidence dropped in August to the lowest level since November, underlining growing pessimism among American consumers, the Conference Board said Tuesday. The board said the consumer confidence index declines to 60.6 in August from July's 65.4. The Expectations Index decreased to 70.5 from 78.4. The Present Situation Index, however, was virtually unchanged, at 45.8 versus 45.9 a month ago. "The Consumer Confidence Index is now at its lowest level since late last year. A more pessimistic outlook was the primary reason for this month's decline in confidence," said Lynn Franco, Director of Economic Indicators at The Conference Board. "Consumers were more apprehensive about business and employment prospects, but more optimistic about their financial prospects despite rising inflation expectations. Consumers' assessment of current conditions was virtually unchanged, suggesting no significant pickup or deterioration in the pace of growth," she added. According to the survey, the percentage of consumers expecting business conditions to improve over the next six months declined to 16.5 percent from 19.0 percent, while those anticipating business conditions will worsen increased to 17.7 percent from 15.1 percent. Meanwhile, consumers' outlook for the labor market was also less favorable. Those expecting more jobs in the months ahead decreased to 15.4 percent from 17.6 percent, while those anticipating fewer jobs rose to 23.4 percent from 20.6 percent. The proportion of consumers expecting an increase in their incomes, however, improved to 15.7 percent from 14.2 percent.