

## CCAA RECEIVES 21 CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

In October, the Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (CCAA) received a total of 21 complaints, including 14 individual and 7 general complaints. Of these, 12 have been successfully resolved, while 9 are still under active investigation. The most commonly reported issues included complaints about contaminated, expired, or defective products, followed by cases related to breaches of contract (see Fig. 1). Breach of business contract and sale of expired or faulty products tops complaint type.

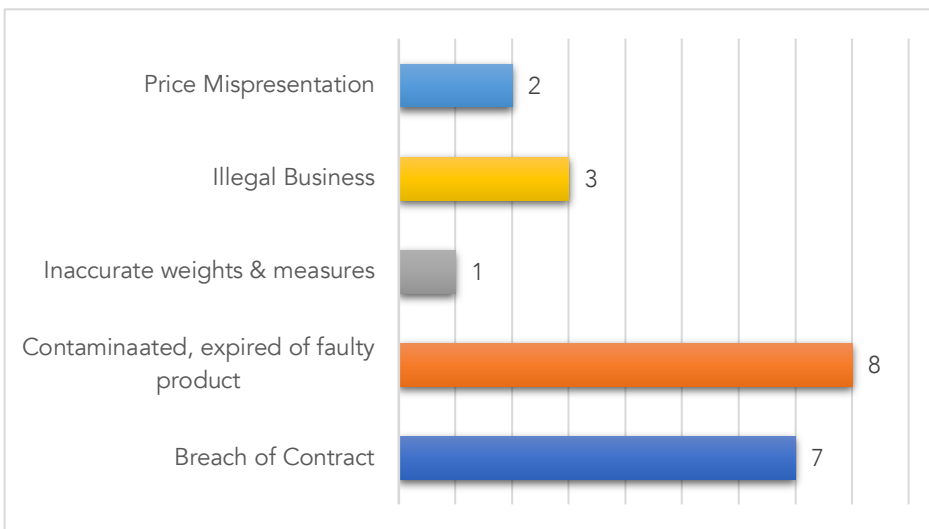


Fig1: Number of complaints by type

### FAQ

1. If I am not based in Thimphu and want to complain in person, where do I go?
2. Does CCAA control the price of goods and services? Is Maximum Retail Price (MRP) marked on the package applicable?
3. Does CCAA act only upon consumer complaints?

Check for answers on page 2.

## MARKET SURVEILLANCE FOCUS – WANGDUE & THIMPHU

During the month, a total of 330 entities were inspected. In Wangduephodrang Dzongkhag, 212 business entities were inspected, while Thimphu Thromde saw 118 entities inspected, with ongoing monitoring in place. These inspections aim to ensure that the products and services provided to consumers meet the required standards. The surveillance focused on businesses

where the greatest number of consumers interact on a daily business, including groceries, hardware shops, Petroleum retail Outlets (PRO) and hotels and restaurants.

## CCAA'S GOVERNING BOARD MEETS FOR THE SECOND TIME

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Governing Board meeting was held on October 16 at Hotel Mayto, Thimphu. The GB reviewed CCAA's Q1 (July–September) progress. Progress on market surveillance, grievance redressal statistics, advocacy programs, and research activities were reported, including the impact of the Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Project, which was recently closed. (Click link for full report: <https://ccaa.gov.bt/?p=13734>)

## CCAA OFFICIALS ATTENDS CONFERENCE ON ASEAN SCP POLICIES AND PRACTICES



Picture 1: Members of delegation with SCP Project Coordinator

A delegation led by the Director of the Bhutan Standards Bureau (BSB), along with officers from the Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (CCAA), the BSB, and the Ministry of Finance (MoF), attended the ASEAN Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Conference in Shah Alam, Malaysia, from October 21 to 22, 2024. The delegation participated

### Answers:

1. You can complain either to the Gup of your Gewog or the Regional Office of Industry, Commerce and Employment (ROICE). ROICE are located in Monggar, SamdrupJongkhar, Trongsa, Gelephu, Phuentsholing & Thimphu.
2. No, CCAA does not control the prices of goods and services. The MRP you see on products from India and other countries is not applicable in Bhutan. Only MRP on products manufactured within Bhutan is applicable. Apart from products such as medicine, petrol, diesel, LPG, sand, timber and locally produced cement; prices for all other consumer goods are dependent on market competition.
3. No, we frequently carry out market monitoring and market research. If we find unethical business practices, we either ask them to rectify or penalize them, depending on the nature and gravity of offense.

in in-depth discussions on eco-labeling, green public procurement (GPP), and strategies for promoting sustainable consumption and production practices.

The "Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) Outreach in Asia" project has been instrumental in advancing eco-labeling and GPP initiatives in Bhutan, significantly contributing to the country's progress toward achieving sustainable development goals.

## **RAPID APPRAISAL OF THE VEHICLE SPARE PARTS SUPPLY SYSTEM**

A study was conducted to assess concerns about the prevalence of counterfeit spare parts being sold at inflated prices in the market. The primary aim of the study was to validate these concerns and explore strategies for ensuring the supply of quality spare parts, while also encouraging private sector involvement in promoting market standards. (Click link for full report: <https://ccaa.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Rapid-Appraisal-for-Vehicle-Spare-Parts-Supply-System.pdf>)

## **EMPOWERING CONSUMERS OF PARO DZONGKHAG**

A consumer protection advocacy program was held in Paro Dzongkhag from October 21 to 30, 2024, engaging 304 businesses and 812 consumers. The initiative aimed to educate participants about their rights and responsibilities, as well as ethical practices outlined in the Consumer Protection Act of 2012 and the Consumer Protection Rules and Regulations of 2015. Additionally, the program emphasized e-commerce safety and the consumer grievance redressal system, providing guidance on effective complaint resolution procedures. (Click link for full report: <https://ccaa.gov.bt/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Consumer-Protection-Advocacy-Program-Concludes-Successfully-in-Paro-Dzongkhag.pdf>)



*Picture II: Consumer empowerment advocacy programs*

## **CCAA BANS GLOBAL E-COMMERCE SCHEME**

A scheme called Global E-commerce had been operating discreetly in Bhutan for some time. Upon becoming aware of it, the CCAA conducted a thorough investigation and determined that it was a pyramid scheme. Pyramid schemes are scams and are prohibited under the Consumer Protection Rules and Regulations of 2015. The CCAA has widely publicized its findings and urged the public to cease participation in the scheme. Individuals are also encouraged to report any sightings of participation or promotion of the scheme to the CCAA. (Click link for notification: <https://ccaa.gov.bt/?p=13718> ).