



CCAA MONTHLY

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§ AT A GLANCE

27 complaints received | 13 resolved | Nu. 20,500 refunded | 65 vendors inspected |
250+ businesses under inspection

January 2026 marked an active month for the Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (CCAA), with strong progress in complaint resolution, targeted market inspections, and continued engagement with businesses and policy stakeholders to strengthen Bhutan's consumer protection framework.

1. CONSUMER REDRESSAL & MARKET INTELLIGENCE

Consumer grievance redressal remains at the heart of CCAA's mandate. During January 2026, the Authority received 27 consumer complaints, reflecting continued public confidence in formal redress mechanisms. Of these, 13 cases were successfully resolved, while 14 cases remain under active investigation and are progressing through established redressal procedures.

Of the total complaints, 19 were individual grievances seeking specific remedies, and 8 were general complaints highlighting broader unfair trade practices. Consistent with CCAA's graduated regulatory approach, businesses implicated in unfair practices were, where appropriate, first given the opportunity to voluntarily correct their conduct before enforcement measures were considered.

2. NATURE OF COMPLAINTS

The complaints received during the month reveal key pressure points in the marketplace (Fig 1). Through active mediation and enforcement, the CCAA facilitated refunds amounting to Nu. 20,500 for two aggrieved consumers during the reporting period.

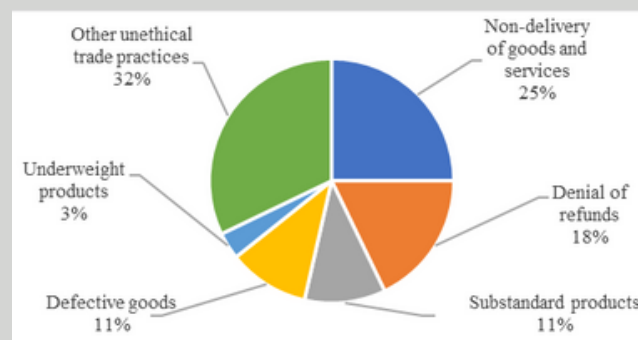


Fig. 1: Distribution of consumer complaints by type – January 2026



3. PROMOTING FAIR TRADE IN THE MARKETPLACE

§ MARKET INSPECTION AT KAJA THROM

The CCAA, in collaboration with officials from the Centenary Farmers Market (CFM), conducted a focused market inspection at Kaja Throm. The exercise covered 65 vendors and assessed compliance with mandatory price display requirements and fair trading practices.

The inspection found high overall compliance, with most vendors displaying prices clearly and transparently. Only three vendors were found to be in violation of price display requirements.

In accordance with CFM Rules and Regulations, these vendors were fined Nu. 500 each and instructed to immediately rectify the non-compliance. As first-time offenders, corrective guidance was emphasized alongside enforcement.

The inspection outcomes have been formally documented to support follow-up monitoring and sustained compliance.

4. EXPANDING MARKET INSPECTIONS: MONGAR & LHUENTSE

Market inspections in Mongar and Lhuentse Dzongkhags commenced on 30 January 2026 and will span 17 days, covering major market centres across the two Dzongkhags. The exercise is expected to reach over 250 businesses, including Fuel Retail Outlets (FROs).

Beyond standard compliance checks - such as issuance of money receipts, price display, product labelling, and use of verified weighing devices - inspections now incorporate enhanced consumer protection parameters, including:



Image 1. Ongoing business inspection in Mongar



- Consistency between displayed and charged prices
- Refund, return, and exchange policies
- Availability of complaint-handling mechanisms
- Non-discriminatory treatment of consumers
- Proper temperature-controlled storage for perishable goods

These expanded inspection criteria are designed to reinforce responsible business conduct and elevate consumer confidence in regional markets.

Consumer feedback:
“CCAA has helped me get a replacement for a defective TV. I am really grateful to the office.”
-Mr. Tika Ram

5. DISPUTE RESOLUTION: DECISIONS THAT MATTER

During January, two complex consumer disputes were referred to the Thimphu Thromde Dispute Settlement Committee (DSC) following unsuccessful mediation efforts.

The first case concerned recurring paint peeling defects in a vehicle purchased in 2017 from an authorized dealer. Despite multiple mediation attempts in late 2025, the dispute remained unresolved due to warranty and documentation issues cited by the respondent.

After a hearing on 20 January 2026, the DSC directed the dealer to undertake a one-time repainting of the affected vehicle parts to remedy the inherent defect. The second case involved persistent performance-related defects, including engine malfunction, in a vehicle supplied in April 2022.

Although an earlier mediation settlement in August 2024 had resulted in component replacements and extended warranty support, subsequent defects led to renewed dispute.

Following a DSC hearing on 20 January 2026, remedial actions were ordered under the applicable extended warranty provisions.

In both cases, the DSC delivered decisions in favour of the consumers on 30 January 2026. As provided under law, either party retains the right to appeal the decision before the competent court within ten days.

Complaint Received



Mediation



DSC Hearing



Decision

Fig 2. From complaint to resolution: How formal dispute settlement protects consumers



Image 2. DSC decision

6. SHAPING POLICY THROUGH CONSULTATION

The Consumer Empowerment and Economics Division (CEED) continued its nationwide stakeholder consultation on the proposed amendment of the Consumer Protection Act, 2012. In January 2026, consultations were held in Phuentsholing Thromde and Samtse Dzongkhag.

A total of 67 participants - including civil servants, business representatives, local government officials, consumers, and private sector stakeholders contributed views and recommendations during these sessions.

The consultations provided valuable insights into practical challenges, emerging market realities, and expectations from a modern consumer protection framework.

The first draft of the report will be discussed within the CCAA, following which a larger public consultation in Thimphu is planned during the Month of March.

7. INSTITUTIONAL UPDATES

§ MONTHLY MEETING WITH THE HON'BLE SECRETARY

The CCAA held its monthly update meeting with the Hon’ble Secretary, Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment (MoICE) on 27 January 2026. The Authority presented updates on ongoing activities, budget utilization, and priority action areas for February 2026.

The Hon'ble Secretary provided strategic guidance on areas for improvement and underscored the importance of sustained professionalism, diligence, and results-oriented public service delivery.

§ LOOKING AHEAD

As markets evolve and consumer expectations rise, the CCAA remains committed to fair competition, ethical business conduct, and effective consumer protection. February 2026 will see intensified inspections, broader public consultations, and continued focus on timely dispute resolution.

An informed consumer and a responsible business community are the foundations of a resilient economy.

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