

CONSUMER PROTECTION · FAIR TRADE · MARKET INTEGRITY

CCAA MONTHLY

News, Data and Analysis from the Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority

VOL. 3 · ISSUE 2 · AUGUST 2026

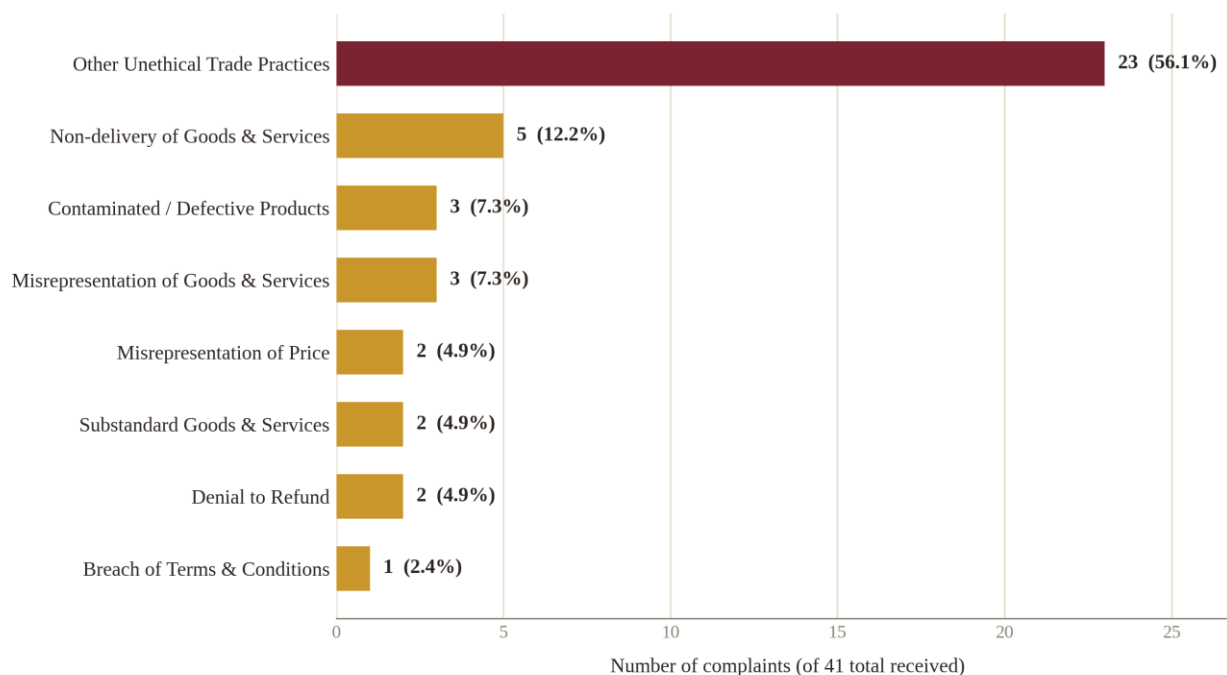
COMPLAINTS & REDRESS

Behind August's Numbers: A Month of Consumer Redress

CCAA fielded **41 consumer complaints** in August — 37 lodged by individual consumers and four raised in a more general, institutional capacity — continuing the Authority's steady work of hearing consumer concerns and holding businesses to account. Of these, **18 were resolved** during the month, while 23 remain open. Fifteen of the pending cases share a common thread: they concern the State Trading Corporation of Bhutan Limited (STCBL) and the import of Toyota vehicles from India.

The complaints themselves span a wide range of grievances. By far the largest share — 23 of 41, or 56.1 percent — fell under the broad heading of “other unethical trade practices,” a catch-all that in August alone covered improper GST deductions on refunds; suspected Ponzi schemes; poor Wi-Fi service; online scams; misuse of identity in trading groups; alleged restrictions on direct Toyota imports; refurbished televisions supplied to an FDI hotel; and the automatic rounding-off of decimal prices at point-of-sale systems — a reminder that unfair trade rarely looks the same way twice.

Fig. 1 — Nature of Consumer Complaints, August 2026



Source: CCAA Consumer Complaints Register, August 2026

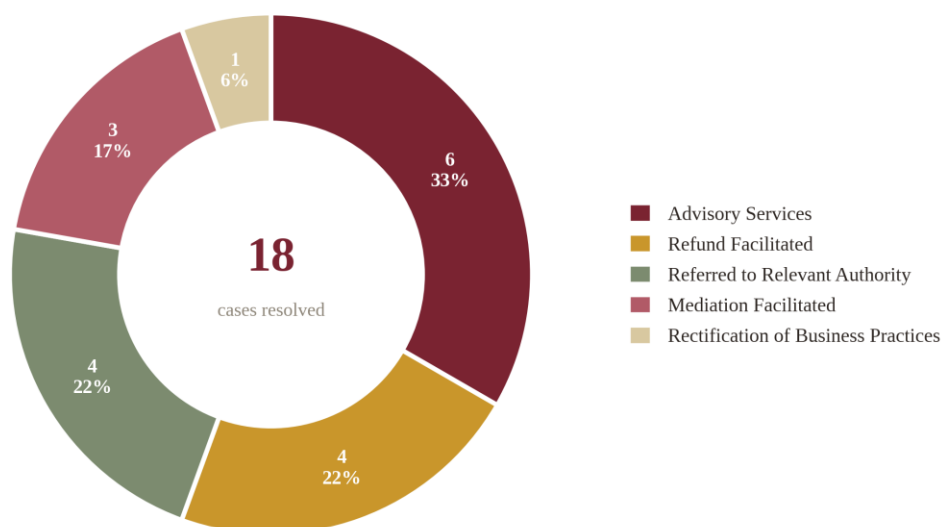
Fig. 1 — Nature of the 41 consumer complaints received in August 2026, by category.

Non-delivery of goods and services was the next most common complaint, at five cases, followed by contaminated or defective products and misrepresentation of goods and services, three cases apiece. Denial of refund, substandard goods and services, and misrepresentation of price each accounted for two complaints, with a single case of breach of terms and conditions rounding out the month.

“Fifteen of the 23 pending cases trace back to a single dispute over Toyota imports — a reminder that one complaint can ripple far wider than it first appears.”

Where cases could be closed, CCAA relied on a mix of tools. Advisory services — explaining rights and options directly to consumers — accounted for the largest share, at six of 18 cases, followed by refund facilitation and referral to other authorities (four cases each), mediation (three), and rectification of business practices (one). In all, Nu. 8,005.50 was refunded directly to four aggrieved consumers during the month.

Fig. 2 — How Resolved Cases Were Addressed



Source: CCAA Consumer Complaints Register, August 2026 · Nu. 8,005.50 refunded to four consumers

Fig. 2 — How CCAA's 18 resolved cases were addressed in August 2026.

MARKET SURVEILLANCE

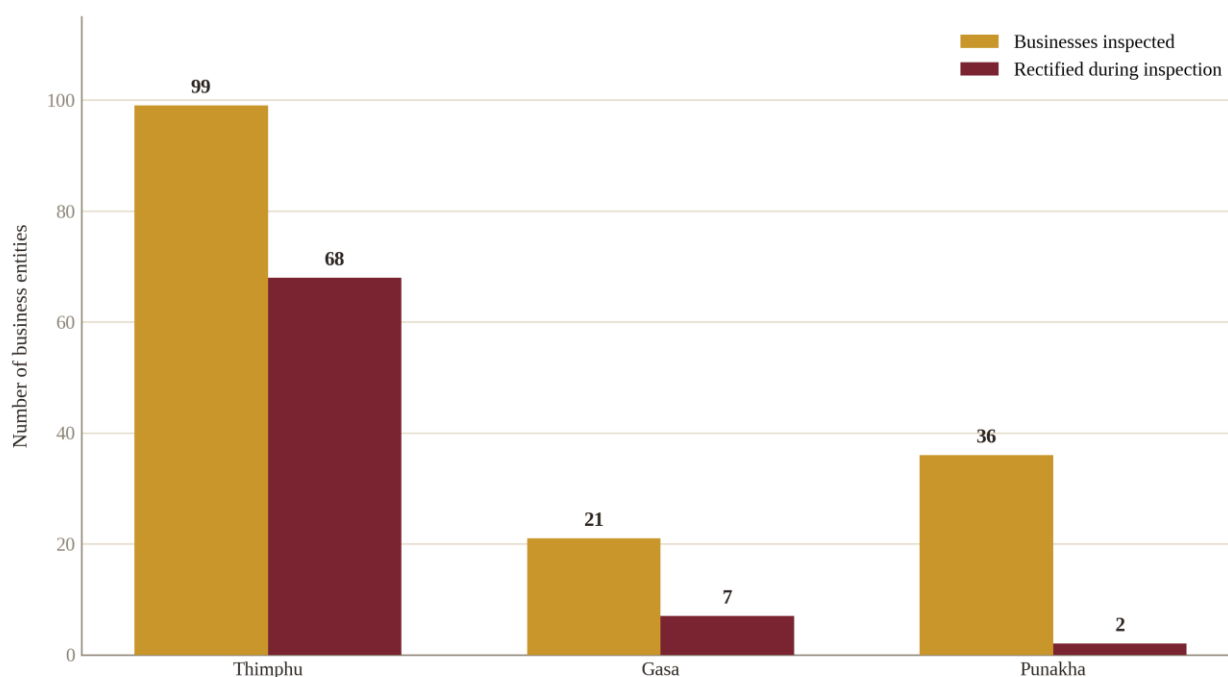
On the Ground: 156 Businesses, Three Dzongkhags

Complaints tell only part of the story; the rest comes from CCAA's own inspectors, who spent August in the field. Over the course of the month, the CCAA inspection team visited 156 business entities across Thimphu, Gasa, and Punakha Dzongkhags.

The largest sweep took place in Thimphu, where 99 business entities were inspected and 68 — more than two in three — were rectified on the spot. Inspectors then moved to Gasa, covering 21 businesses, including one Fuel Retail Outlet (FRO), of which seven required rectification. In Punakha, 36 entities were inspected,

with two rectifications. Further inspection activity in Punakha, together with newly launched inspections in Wangdue Phodrang Dzongkhag, remains ongoing.

Fig. 3 — Market Inspections by Dzongkhag, August 2026



Source: CCAA Market Surveillance Reports, August 2026 · Gasa figure includes one Fuel Retail Outlet

Fig. 3 — Businesses inspected and rectified by Dzongkhag, August 2026.

RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS

Price Watch

As part of its Price Watch initiative, aimed at empowering consumers with timely market price information, the CCAA collected and monitored the prices of essential food items from major retailers in six key markets—Thimphu, Phuentsholing, Gelephu, Samdrupjongkhar, Monggar, and Trongsa. The price information was shared through the CCAA’s official Facebook page to help consumers make informed purchasing decisions.

To expand its reach beyond social media, the CCAA also conducted a trial publication of the Thimphu Price Watch in *The Bhutanese*. The initiative received encouraging feedback and demonstrated the potential of using mainstream media to reach a wider audience. Building on this experience, the CCAA will explore publishing Price Watch information for all six markets through widely circulated newspapers in the future.

Bhutan's Craft Sector: Building Fair Competition, Protecting Consumers

Behind every hand-woven kira and painted thanangka sold to a visiting tourist lies a retail economy that CCAA set out to understand this month. The Authority published a study examining the retail craft sector in Thimphu and Paro — souvenirs, textiles and thanngas are, after all, part of what draws visitors to Bhutan in the first place — and its findings suggest that fairness in this market still has room to grow.

THE CRAFT SECTOR, BY THE NUMBERS

- 58% of surveyed shops have operated for more than a decade
- ~50% of retailers admit imported goods are sometimes sold as locally made
- 84% of consumers actively try to verify a product's true origin
- 94% of retailers pay commissions to tour guides for referrals
- Tourists pay 10–50% more than local buyers for the same products

This is a durable trade — more than half of the shops surveyed have been in business for over a decade. But the study also surfaced real concerns for fair competition and consumer protection. Nearly half of retailers acknowledged that imported goods are sometimes presented as locally made, even as 84 percent of consumers said they actively try to verify where a product actually comes from. Most strikingly, 94 percent of retailers surveyed said they pay commissions to tour guides for referrals — a practice the study links to tourists being charged 10 to 50 percent more than local buyers for identical products.

Based on these findings, CCAA has proposed a national craft certification scheme, origin-disclosure requirements, and greater transparency around guide commissions — measures intended to let genuine Bhutanese craftsmanship compete on its merits, while giving consumers, local and visiting alike, the accurate information they need to buy with confidence.

Read the full study at www.ccaa.gov.bt

COMPETITION WATCH

Competition in the Meat Industry

CCAA also released findings from a study of competition in Thimphu's meat market, and the results point to something increasingly rare in small, tightly-knit markets: shops genuinely competing on price. Prices for beef, pork, sekam and shakam were found to vary significantly from one shop to the next — a sign that retailers are increasingly setting their own prices rather than following a common price list.

The shift follows CCAA's earlier intervention to stop collective price fixing among meat vendors, paired with subsequent training for retailers. Together, the findings suggest that intervention is working: most establishments are now pricing independently. CCAA notes that continued price monitoring and greater transparency will be needed to sustain the gains, and continues to welcome public feedback on competition and consumer matters.

More information at www.ccaa.gov.bt

OUTREACH

Ask CCAA Returns for a Third Episode

CCAA released the third episode of “Ask CCAA,” its in-house video series built around the everyday questions Bhutanese consumers actually have — practical information, clear answers and useful tips on everyday shopping concerns and consumer rights.

The Authority is encouraging viewers to watch and share the episode with family, friends, and colleagues, and is seeking public feedback on what viewers liked, how the in-house production could be improved, and which consumer questions or topics should be covered in future episodes.

Watch the episode on [CCAA's official Facebook page](#)

REGULATORY REFORM

Nineteen Dzongkhags, One Conversation About Doing Business



Delegates pose following the Business Regulatory Reform stakeholder consultation in Samtse.

The MoICE's 15-day Dzongkhag Consultation Programme concluded on August 24, 2026, having covered 19 Dzongkhags and engaged thousands of participants along the way. A CCAA officer travelled with the delegation, which included the Hon'ble Minister, senior officials, and representatives from various departments and agencies under MoICE, meeting directly with local communities and businesses to share updates on government initiatives and hear concerns firsthand.

The consultations doubled as a progress check on the Business Regulatory Process Review (BRPR): of 196 regulatory issues identified nationwide, 151 have now been resolved, with 31 more requiring further, higher-level intervention. Participants raised concerns spanning regulatory clearances, overlapping mandates, business licensing, tourism, labour, infrastructure, market access, and private-sector support.

The throughline, across all 19 Dzongkhags, was consistent: streamline regulatory processes, clarify institutional roles, strengthen inter-agency coordination, and improve public awareness to support local businesses and economic development.

GET IN TOUCH

CCAA welcomes consumer complaints, tip-offs and feedback from the public.

Visit www.ccaa.gov.bt or CCAA's official Facebook page to learn more, share feedback, or file a complaint.

ABOUT CCAA

The Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority (CCAA) is the regulatory body responsible for competition and consumer protection under the Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Employment, Royal Government of Bhutan.

CCAA Monthly · Vol. 3 / Issue 2 · August 2026 · © Competition and Consumer Affairs Authority