THE NEWSLETTER OF THE COMPETITION AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS AUTHORITY OF BHUTAN

CCAA Monthly

October 2026

In October the Authority recorded 27 consumer complaints and resolved 18 of them, facilitating Nu 124,484 in refunds. Its inspectors visited 308 businesses across three dzongkhags, its outreach team addressed 703 people in Trongsa, and its price monitors tracked 49 commodities in six markets. This issue explains how those numbers came about, and what they suggest.

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October in numbers

Key indicators, consumer protection and market monitoring

INDICATOR	OCTOBER 2026	DETAIL
Complaints recorded	27	26 from individuals, one of a general nature
Complaints resolved	18	Resolution rate of about 67% within the month
Refunds facilitated	Nu 124,484	Across seven cases
Businesses inspected	308	Zhemgang, Trongsa and Bumthang; 7–26 October
Outreach participants	703	582 consumers and 121 business entities in Trongsa
Commodities monitored	49	Across six markets; up to 294 price comparisons

Source: CCAA. The resolution rate is calculated from 18 resolved of 27 recorded complaints.

CONSUMER COMPLAINTS

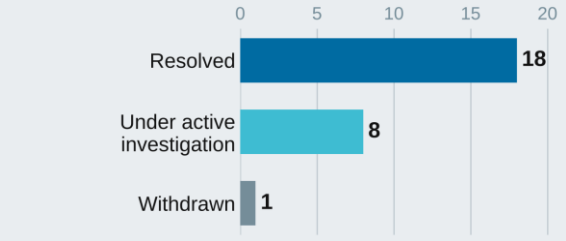
Two in three settled

Twenty-seven grievances, 18 resolutions and the familiar catalogue of ways a purchase can go wrong

THE AUTHORITY RECORDED 27 COMPLAINTS in October: 26 from individual consumers and one of a general nature. By month-end 18 had been resolved, eight were under active investigation and one had been withdrawn, a resolution rate of about two-thirds.

Most complaints were closed within the month

Status of 27 consumer complaints recorded in October 2026, number



Source: CCAA

The grievances will be familiar to anyone who follows the Authority's work. Consumers reported goods that were paid for but never delivered, defective products (vehicles among them), refunds owed but not paid, substandard services, overcharging and missing purchase receipts. Others alleged misrepresentation of goods and services, or trading without a valid licence.

Remedies took several forms. Some consumers received refunds or replacement goods; in other cases the Authority mediated between consumer and trader in accordance with the law. A number of complainants, it

emerged, were unaware of the rules that applied to them, or had approached the wrong agency; they were advised and, where appropriate, referred to other government bodies. A few cases required the intervention of the Dispute Settlement Committee (DSC).

Refunds facilitated across seven cases totalled Nu 124,484, equivalent to roughly Nu 17,800 per case.

MARKET SURVEILLANCE

Mostly compliant, not yet complete

Inspectors visited 308 businesses in three dzongkhags and found a broadly reassuring picture, with GST the weakest link

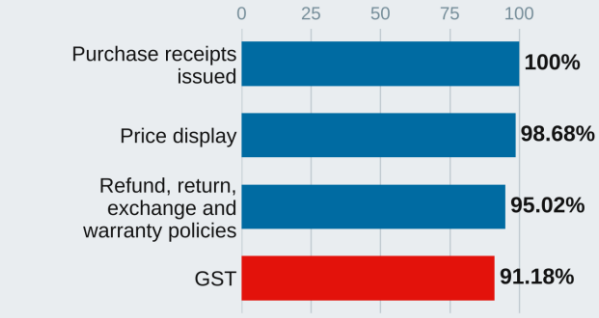
Between 7 and 26 October a market surveillance team inspected 308 business establishments in Zhemgang, Trongsa and Bumthang, an average of about 15 a day. The commercial landscape there is dominated by small enterprises: retail shops, hotels and restaurants, and cottage and small-scale manufacturers. Overall, compliance with consumer-protection requirements was assessed as satisfactory.

> ***"Satisfactory is not the same as complete."***

The inspectors found expired calibration certificates on weighing and measuring devices, weak systems for refunds, returns, exchanges and warranties, instances of non-compliance with price-display requirements, and problems with the Goods and Services Tax (GST) among registered businesses.

Receipts universal, GST the weak spot

Compliance rate by area, 7–26 October 2026, %



Source: CCAA inspection findings

GST is a fairly new tax reform of the Royal Government, and small businesses are still working out how it applies to them in practice. Such cases are routinely notified to the Department of Revenue and Customs (DRC), which handles them. On receipts, the result was unambiguous: every business inspected issued them, although the team noted that bookkeeping among some of them needs to improve.

AREA	RATE, %	GAP, PP
Purchase receipts	100.00	0.00
Price display	98.68	1.32
Refund, return, exchange and warranty policies	95.02	4.98
GST	**91.18**	**8.82**

Source: CCAA. Gap is the shortfall from full compliance, in percentage points, calculated from the published rates.

Established shopkeepers raised a different complaint: home-based e-commerce operators trading without proper business licences, which, they argue, distorts fair competition.

The team advised businesses on how to improve compliance and offered guidance on the spot. It also notified the Bhutan Standards Bureau (BSB) of the outlets whose weighing and measuring devices require calibration. Its recommendations to the Authority were to strengthen market monitoring, review the licensing compliance of online sellers, improve the transparency of business policies and intensify advocacy so that businesses better understand the consumer-protection requirements that apply to them.

HANDICRAFTS

Craft, counted

A study of the craft retail sector goes to the artisans it concerns

THIMPHU, 2 OCTOBER — At the request of the Handicrafts Association of Bhutan (HAB), the Authority presented the findings of its study, *A Study of Bhutan's Craft Retail Sector: Challenges, Practices and the Path to a Dynamic and Sustainable Industry*, at the association's Annual General Meeting.

The study's argument is that Bhutanese crafts matter to the economy, and to tourism in particular, and that the sector's future depends on four things. Together, these would build consumer confidence and put the industry on a sustainable footing.

The four pillars

What the study says a sustainable craft sector requires

1. **Transparent pricing**
2. **Quality certification**
3. **Fair competition**
4. **Stronger support for artisans**

Source: CCAA craft retail sector study

The findings and recommendations were well received, and HAB said it would work with the government to put them into practice. The full report is available from the Authority.

PRICES

The price of things, quarterly

The Market Price Information platform publishes its latest figures

The Authority has released its Market Price Information (MPI) report for the first quarter of the fiscal year, covering prices up to September 2026. Data on essential goods were collected from key markets in every dzongkhag and thromde.

The MPI is designed first as a tool for shoppers. It allows consumers to compare prices across outlets in their own locality, identify significant differences and judge whether what they are being charged is reasonable, thereby promoting price transparency and accountability in the marketplace.

It has a second use. Built on the substantial archive of market-price data that the Authority has accumulated, the platform can underpin evidence-based policy interventions by government, with the aim of making markets fairer, more transparent and more competitive for the benefit of consumers. The MPI platform is available online.

OUTREACH

Ask CCAA: shopping online, in five minutes

Short videos aim to make consumer protection visible, relatable and memorable

8 OCTOBER — The Authority takes the view that audio-visual material makes abstract knowledge visible, relatable and memorable to a broad audience. Hence *Ask CCAA*, a series of short videos, four to five minutes long, on topical consumer-protection and market-competition issues, performed by in-house actors.

The latest episode examines online shopping: its benefits and its risks, among them scams, misleading practices and fraudulent operators. The core advice is to keep a record of the advertisement, the conversation and the payment, since that is the evidence a consumer will need if something goes wrong.

The series is published on the CCAA Facebook page. Its following, at 8.1 thousand, is modest but growing steadily, and the page remains the Authority's main channel for news, information and updates.

GOVERNANCE

The Governing Body convenes

Research findings, surveillance and grievance reports on the agenda

THIMPHU, 16 OCTOBER — The Governing Body brings together members from relevant government agencies, the private sector and civil society organisations, and provides strategic guidance to the Authority in carrying out its mandate. It held its first meeting of the 2026–27 fiscal year at the Authority on 16 October.

The agenda covered the findings of recent research, the reports on market surveillance and consumer grievances, and other highlights from the first quarter of the new fiscal year.

CONSUMER AWARENESS

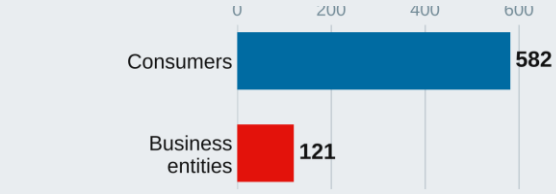
Eight days in Trongsa

An advocacy programme reached 703 people at seven venues, from the town centre to the gewogs

Between 13 and 20 October the Authority's team ran a consumer awareness and advocacy programme in Trongsa Dzongkhag, reaching 703 participants: 582 consumers and 121 business entities, or about 88 people a day.

Consumers made up more than four in five participants

Participants in the Trongsa programme, 13–20 October 2026, number



Source: CCAA

The programme covered a wide circuit: Trongsa Town, the Dzongkhag Dratshang, Tangsibji Gewog, the Trongsa College of Heritage and Contemporary Studies, the Samdrupcholing Goenzin Dratshang, the Kuenga Rabten Nunnery Dratshang and Drakteng Gewog.

PROGRAMME AT A GLANCE

Duration	8 days
Participants	703
Consumers	582 (83%)
Business entities	121 (17%)
Average per day	About 88
Venues covered	7

Source: CCAA. Shares and daily average calculated from the published totals.

The aim was to strengthen understanding of consumer rights and business responsibilities under the Consumer Protection Act 2012 and the Consumer Protection Rules and Regulations 2015. Topics included unfair trade practices, product quality and safety, price display, the issuing of receipts, e-commerce safety, financial scams, unauthorised tax collection and the procedure for lodging a complaint. Discussion and question-and-answer sessions let participants raise their own concerns and seek clarification.

The Regional Office of Industry, Commerce and Employment (ROICE), Trongsa helped mobilise participants and answered queries within its remit. The Authority thanks the Trongsa Dzongkhag Administration, the Gewog Administrations, Taktse College and the participating consumers and businesses for their support.

PRICES

The monthly watch: 49 goods, six markets

One published report each month, built on up to 294 price comparisons

Each month the Authority's Market Price Watch (MPW) tracks the prices of 49 essential commodities across six major markets, yielding up to 294 price comparisons. The exercise is intended to reveal price movements, market trends, differences between markets and potential irregularities, and provides a basis for market assessments, regulatory action and policy recommendations.

The October edition was published on 31 October so that consumers can compare prices and shop with better information. In the Authority's assessment, the MPW promotes price transparency, widens consumers' access to market information and supports evidence-based market monitoring.