

## CONSUMER PROTECTION, MARKET MONITORING AND UNFAIR TRADE STATISTICS - AUGUST 2022

### SECTION 1: COMPLAINTS & REDRESSAL STATUS

The Office of Consumer Protection (OCP) received 15 consumer complaints against various business entities during August. 12 complaints have been redressed and closed while 3 are still in process (Fig. i).

*Fig. i: Number of complaints received and redressed*



There were a couple of complaints against promoters/ members of an on-line marketing scheme called QNET (which later turned out to be a pyramid scheme), use of inaccurate weights and measures, product price ambiguity and delay in the delivery of products (Fig. ii). Complaints against online businesses are increasing in frequency with time. The promoters / members of QNET were directed to stop all forms of this business with immediate effect and the public was notified through mass media to refrain from engaging with this business.

There were also a couple of allegations of fuel adulteration by POL Retail Outlets located at Motithang and Chubachu. Preliminary testing of fuel on site immediately following complaints did not reveal any adulteration. Further testing carried out by Department of Trade laboratory conclusively ruled out adulteration.

*Fig. iii: Number of complaints by nature of violation*



## SECTION 2: MARKET SURVEILLANCE

### 1. 2.1 Market Inspection in Sarpang Dzongkhag & Gelephu Thromde and Samdrupjongkhar dzongkhag & Thromde

A total of 95 business entities in Sarpang & Gelephu Thromde and 39 business entities in SamdrupJongkhar Thromde were inspected between 31 July to 3 August 2022 (Table I); mainly to ascertain compliance to regulatory requirements by grocers, automobile workshops and meat shops in these localities. The minimum requirements include properly displaying product or service prices, employing accurate weights & measures, issuance of purchase receipts and labeling products adequately.

In general, majority of business entities were compliant while the few errant businesses were asked to immediately make changes and a total of 12 businesses in Sarpang and Gelephu were fined.

*Table 1: Number of Business Entities Inspected under SamdrupJongkhar Thromde and Sarpang Dzongkhag & Gelephu Thromde*

Date of inspection	Market places	Dzongkhag	Grocery store	Automobile workshop	Meat shop
31 July - 3 August, 2022	Sompangkha, Jigmeling & Thromde	Sarpang	59	22	14
5 - 9 August, 2022	Thromde	S/ Jongkhar	22	13	4
<b>Total business inspected</b>			76	35	18

### 2.2 Market Inspection in Chhukha & Phuentsholing Thromde

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Similar inspection of a total of 142 business entities under Chhukha & Phuentsholing Thromde were made (Table 2).

*Table 2: Details of business entities Inspected under Chhukha Dzongkhag & Phuentsholing Thromde*

Dzongkhag Thromde	Market Place(s)	Groceries	Automobile Workshops	Meat Shops	Total
Phuentsholing Thromde	Core area/Main Town	52	28	41	121
Chukha	Pasakha, (Sampheling Gewog)	8	0	0	8
Chukha	Kamjee (Geling gewog)	9	0	0	9
Chukha	Wangdigatshel (Ramity) P/ling Gewog	4	0	0	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>73</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>142</b>

## **2.3 Market Inspection of Meat Shops, Thimphu Thromde**

Following fixation of maximum retail price of locally produced pork in Thimphu Thromde by the Ministry of Agriculture and Forests for August, three-rounds of inspections were carried out covering all 38 meat shops to check for compliance. Apart from one incidence of non-compliance by a meat shop in Norzin Lam Wog in the beginning, all shops were fully compliant. The defaulting shop was imposed a penalty of Nu. 7,000 along with the directive for compliance.

### **SECTION 3: COMPLAINT REFERRED TO DISPUTE SETTLEMENT COMMITTEE**

A consumer dispute between a Thimphu-based Education Consultancy & Placement Firm (ECPF) and three of its former client following unsuccessful mediation was referred to the Dispute Settlement Committee(DSC) of Thimphu. The dispute arising from the alleged failure by the placement firm to carry out due diligence (non-submission of the mandatory documents while applying for visa to study in Canada), is understood to have resulted in the rejection of visa by the Canadian Embassy/ High Commission in New Delhi. DSC is a body established under Consumer Protection Act, 2012 to settle consumer disputes quickly and efficiently, without having to resort to the court of law.

### **SECTION 4: CONCLUSION**

The OCP continues to strive to provide consumer protection services and support business entities where necessary, in addition to encouraging compliance to the regulatory requirements by business entities to improve consumers' experience and welfare.

If you wish to avail consumer protection service or if you happen to observe any unfair trade practice in the marketplaces, kindly contact us either calling at **1214 (Toll-free)**, or submitting an online complaint via [www.ocp.gov.bt](http://www.ocp.gov.bt) or by visiting the office during working hours.