

# Jack Ma defends Alibaba amid fakes row

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Chinese billionaire and Alibaba founder Jack Ma speaks during a forum in Hong Kong, February 2, 2015

Alibaba founder Jack Ma has defended his company's reputation after authorities accused it of allowing "illegal" actions on its multi-billion-dollar online shopping platform, saying he does not want it to be seen as a hub for fake products.

The Chinese billionaire spoke out after a powerful Beijing regulator delivered an unusual dressing down of the prominent [company](#), publishing a survey saying only about a third of products sampled from Alibaba's consumer-to-consumer marketplace Taobao were genuine.

"We don't want (to be) misunderstood by the world that we are not transparent. We don't want (to be) misunderstood by the world that Taobao is a platform for selling fake products," Ma said late Monday on a visit to Hong Kong.

In rare public criticism of a domestic firm, the State Administration for Industry & Commerce (SAIC) last week accused Alibaba of allowing "illegal operations" to flourish on its websites, and told its executives to "overcome arrogance."

The SAIC, charged with maintaining market order

in China, took aim at Taobao—which is estimated to hold more than 90 percent of the domestic market—as well as Tmall.com, a business-to-consumer [platform](#).

Ma said Monday that the company is listening to regulators and pushing for change, adding that the e-commerce giant has sent 400 people to jail for selling fake products.

"Doing business anywhere with any regulatory (bodies) you will have a problem, you have to talk, communicate, listen, change and push. This is what we are doing," Ma said.



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The comments come after Ma met on Friday with SAIC director Zhang Mao, which could signal a de-escalation of the dispute.

Alibaba is often described as the Chinese version of eBay, but it surpassed the US company in China more than a decade ago, essentially forcing it to retreat in the Chinese market.

Ma, a former English teacher, regained the title of

Asia's richest man with the anticipated listing of his firm's Zhejiang Ant Small and Micro Financial Services Group, worth \$50 billion, Bloomberg News reported.

The financial services firm is mulling a private share sale before an IPO in 2016, Bloomberg reported, citing sources familiar with the company.

Ma said Monday it was "still a bit early" to reveal detailed plans for the company known as Ant Financial, but indicated that a listing for this year was off the cards.

Ma and Hong Kong tycoon Li Ka-shing have been vying for the title of the richest man in Asia in the past couple of months, with Li losing the title in December after holding it since 2012.

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