

Amazon tycoon Bezos flies into internet trading storm in India

15 January 2020



Traders protested in November 2019 against the market dominance of e-commerce giants Amazon and Flipkart

Angry Indian street traders vowed Wednesday to stage protests against the world's richest man Jeff Bezos as the Amazon tycoon started a visit just as authorities launched an anti-trust investigation into e-commerce giants.

Bezos, whose worth has been estimated at more than \$110 billion, is officially in India for a meeting of [business](#) leaders in New Delhi.

But the Competition Commission of India announced Monday that it was investigating Amazon and its main rival in the [domestic market](#), the Walmart-owned Flipkart, over accusations they had killed off [small businesses](#) by favouring "preferred sellers" on their platforms.

Media reports said Bezos has sought a meeting with India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but neither the government nor Amazon would confirm if talks would be held.

Amazon has said it will cooperate with the investigation and was "confident" it was operating

legally.

But traders across India said they would stage protests during the visit to demand the government takes action against Amazon.

The merchants accuse Amazon and Flipkart of flouting foreign investment rules and pouring billions of dollars into discounts that force traditional traders out of business.

Flipkart was Indian owned until bought by Walmart for \$16 billion in 2018 following a bidding war with Amazon.

The Confederation of All India Traders, which says it represents 70 million small businesses, vowed "strong protests" in 300 cities—including New Delhi, where Bezos was to speak on Wednesday at the Amazon business summit.

The competition commission said it will report in 60 days, but its inquiries normally take a lot longer.

Last year it fined Google \$21 million for "search bias" and abusing its [dominant position](#).

After arriving Tuesday, Bezos paid tribute to India's independence leader Mahatma Gandhi, dressing in an Indian kurta to lay flowers at a memorial in Delhi.

He described Gandhi in a Twitter message as someone who "truly changed the world".

Bezos will also visit India's financial capital Mumbai, where he will reportedly attend a party with Bollywood celebrities on Thursday evening.

Since its launch in India in 2016, the company's streaming platform Amazon Prime has partnered with the who's who of Bollywood to produce entertainment content in several Indian languages.

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