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According to the Yomiuri Shimbun Daily a number of big names are in a bidding war for the Toshiba NAND memory unit, including the likes of Apple, Google and Amazon.



In total, the Japanese newspaper says, 10 companies are looking to buy the Toshiba semiconductor operation. Among them are US private equity firm Silver Lake, Broadcom (who reportedly offered Toshiba around $18 billion for the unit), Western Digital, SK Hynix, Foxconn and TSMC.

Toshiba accounts for 20% of the NAND market, but apparently plans to sell the lucrative unit to make up for the loss of US nuclear unit Westinghouse Electric, which recently filed for bankruptcy protection.

“The US tech firms-- Apple, Google and Amazon-- have become the next attractive bidders following Western Digital as Toshiba can have stable supply chains (for smartphones or data servers) from them,” an anonymous source tells the Korea Herald. “Then comes SK Hynix, which can create synergy with Toshiba as the same chipmakers. Hon Hai is the least attractive bidder as Toshiba and the Japanese government do not want to sell the firm to Chinese companies because of the technology leak concerns.”

A NAND memory maker is an attractive purchase for any big company. Apple would be interested in gaining more production capability (and is already a key Toshiba client), while Google and Amazon want to make own datacentres without need for other chipmakers. As for SK Hynix, the Toshiba memory unit purchase would turn it into the biggest NAND flash maker in the world.

Nikkei reports Japanese authorities are favouring an American buyer over Asian rivals-- after all, Toshiba memory chips find use in SSDs storing classified information with advanced encryption, and the government in Tokyo worries such technology might fall in the hands of the Chinese military.

Go Will Apple Buy Toshiba Semiconductor Unit? (Yomiuri Online)

Go Apple, Google's Joining Toshiba Bid Lowers SK Hynix's Chance (The Korea Herald)

Go Tricky Path Ahead for Toshiba on Chip Sale (Nikkei)