

Uber selling Southeast Asia operations to Grab: report

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Models stand beside Grab cars in Phnom Penh during the ride hailing-firm's launch in Cambodia in December 2017

Uber is selling parts of its Southeast Asia operations to local rival Grab, getting a piece of the action in the process, according to US media reports.

Grab is on the cusp of buying Uber's business in some Southeast Asia markets in a deal that would give the California-based smartphone-summoned ride service a stake in its competitor, reported Bloomberg and the Wall Street Journal.

The size of the stake could be around 20 percent or more than 30 percent, according to the reports, which cited unnamed sources.

Uber did not respond to an AFP request or comment.

The US ride share titan faces fierce competition in Asia, not only from Singapore-based Grab but from Ola in India, and Chinese rival Didi Chuxing.

Japanese financial titan Softbank has invested billions of dollars in Uber, Didi, Ola and Grab, and is known for seeking synergies between companies in its portfolio.

Didi and Uber ended a ferocious battle in the surging Chinese market in 2016 with a tie-up along the lines of the reported deal with Grab.

Southeast Asia's top ride-hailing firm Grab launched services in the Cambodian capital Phnom Penh late last year as it looked to lock down regional domination against main rival Uber.

Grab, which launched in 2012, has poured money into expanding its regional fleet and now has more than 2.1 million drivers in Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar and Cambodia.

Competition between ride-hailing apps has been heating up in Southeast Asia's rapidly expanding market, which is forecast to grow more than five times to \$13.1 billion by 2025, according to a 2016 report by

Singapore investment firm Temasek.

While ridesharing giant Uber is the largest firm of its kind with a presence in more than 600 cities, the US-based company has been rocked by scandals and is facing fierce competition from rivals in Asia and Europe.

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