

Uber eyes valuation topping \$100 bn in IPO: sources

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Uber could launch the richest tech sector IPO ever at a valuation over \$100 billion, according to sources

Uber is eyeing a valuation above \$100 billion for its much-anticipated share offering due in 2019, which would be the biggest-ever in the tech sector, sources familiar with the plan said Tuesday.

The sources told AFP the global ridesharing giant is considering speeding up its plans for an initial public offering (IPO) to the first half of 2019, rather than the second half of the year.

Uber, which operates in over 60 countries, is already the largest of the venture-backed "unicorns" valued at more than \$1 billion, which until recently was considered rare without tapping stock markets.

Its most recent investment—a \$500 million injection from Japanese auto giant Toyota—was made at a reported valuation of \$72 billion.

Earlier Tuesday, the Wall Street Journal reported that bankers were proposing a valuation as high as \$120 billion for Uber, which has been a disruptive force in many cities where regulators and taxi operators have challenged its business model.

Uber offered no comment on the IPO plans.

Sources told AFP the timing of the IPO will depend on market conditions and that Uber was in talks with Goldman Sachs and Morgan Stanley to be lead underwriters. The two firms declined comment.

Uber is due to make a market debut by the end of 2019 as part of an investment deal with Japan's SoftBank, which has a stake of some 15 percent.



As Uber has grown, it has also faced protests around the world, including a demonstration this month by drivers in London calling for higher fares and improved workers' rights

Heated race

The ridesharing group last year hired a new chief executive, Dara Khosrowshahi, who has vowed to fix the company's work culture and business practices after a series of missteps and scandals over executive misconduct, a toxic work atmosphere and potentially unethical competitive practices.

Under Khosrowshahi, Uber has moved to boost transparency and become more accountable. Last month, it settled an investigation into a

2016 data breach with a payment of \$148 million, and earlier this year reached a settled with former Google car unit Waymo over allegedly stolen trade secrets.

Uber reported a loss of \$891 million in the second quarter as revenues jumped 63 percent to \$2.8 billion, with bookings hitting \$12 billion.

As it expands its ridesharing services, Uber is also seeking to become a major player in autonomous cars, and has agreed to buy and adapt vehicles from Volvo to begin operating self-driving taxis.



CEO Dara Khosrowshahi has moved to boost transparency at Uber since taking over a year ago, as the ridesharing giant prepares for what could be a record stock offering

Uber briefly suspended tests of self-driving cars in March following a fatal accident in Arizona. It resumed testing in Pennsylvania in July, but with a driver behind the wheel at all times, the company said.

If its valuation tops \$100 billion, Uber would be worth more than the combined value of the three big automakers General Motors, Ford and Fiat Chrysler Automobiles.

Separately, Uber rival Lyft had selected JPMorgan Chase as the lead underwriter, a source told AFP.

The Wall Street Journal first reported JPMorgan had been chosen along with Credit Suisse and Jefferies Group for its IPO next year, which could value the company at some \$15 billion.

The two San Francisco firms have been in a heated race in the US market. Lyft has discussed international plans but so far has expanded only to a handful of cities in Canada.



A ride hailing vehicle which has logos for both Lyft and Uber moves through traffic in Manhattan, amid intense competition between the two app-based transport services

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