Tech rival not getting Taiwan New Year's spotlight

The Associated Press

South Korea's high-tech sector won't be taking the spotlight at Taiwan's biggest annual extravaganza.

The New Year's fireworks display at Taipei 101 has long been among the world's most spectacular. This year, South Korean electronics giant Samsung Electronics Co. reportedly had offered 40 million New Taiwan dollars ($1.4 million) to light the building's top stories with the Samsung name and logo after the fireworks.

With many people and politicians voicing objection to selling the display to Samsung, tourism authorities bought the right to show the tourism logo "Time for Taiwan" in both English and Chinese characters.

Taipei 101 spokesman Michael Liu declined to say if tourism authorities won the bid over Samsung.

But Taiwan's Vice Transport Minister Yeh Kuang-shih, who oversees tourism, has said a Samsung commercial on New Year's eve "would be inappropriate under the current atmosphere."

Taiwan has vied bitterly with South Korea in high-tech sectors from chip making, computers to smartphones. With Samsung gaining in financial, design and manufacturing prowess, the South Korean giant has beat several of its Taiwanese competitors, most notably smartphone maker HTC Corp.

HTC's latest strategy — advertising heavily in Japan — appears to have helped to halt it sliding revenues, likely because Japanese consumers are just as wary about South Korean makers' threat to their domestic makers.

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