Canada excludes Boeing from fighter jet competition

Canada has officially narrowed its decade-long hunt for a new fighter jet to two choices as the federal government confirmed US aerospace giant Boeing's Super Hornet is out of the running to replace the military's aging CF-18s.

The announcement on Wednesday from Public Services and Procurement Canada came nearly a week after Boeing had reportedly been told its bid for the $19-billion contract did not meet Ottawa's requirements.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal government refused to comment publicly at that time, and there was uncertainty around whether the US aerospace giant had been dropped from the competition to provide Canada with 88 new fighter jets.

But the federal procurement department confirmed in a statement Wednesday that Lockheed Martin's F-35 stealth fighter and the Swedish Saab Gripen are the only two aircraft still in contention.

While the statement did not say why Boeing's offer did not make the cut, the fact that one of the two US companies competing for the contract failed to make the final shortlist represents a major turn of events.

Following the government's announcement, Boeing issued its own statement saying it was "disappointed and deeply concerned" that its Super Hornet had not made it to the next phase of the competition.

"We are working with the US and Canadian governments to better understand the decision and looking for the earliest date to request a debrief to then determine our path forward,□ the company said.

Many observers had seen the Super Hornet and F-35 as the only real competition because of Canada's close relationship with the United States, which includes using fighter jets together to defend North American air space on a daily basis.

Those perceptions were only amplified after two other European companies dropped out of the competition before it even started, complaining the government's requirements had stacked the deck in favor of their US rivals.

In particular, both Airbus and Dassault had complained about what they saw as onerous requirements associated with adapting their aircraft - the Eurofighter and Rafale, respectively - to meet Canada's intelligence-sharing requirements.

Those requirements included ensuring their aircraft could integrate with the top-secret Canada-US intelligence network known as "Two Eyes", which is used to defend North America. (AP)

US stocks slump after murky jobs report as markets swing

Trader John Santiago, left, works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Thursday, Dec. 2, 2021. A week of volatile swings on Wall Street ended Friday with more losses for stocks, as a mixed batch of U.S. job market data triggered another bout of dizzying trading. (AP)

All indexes posted weekly loss

NEW YORK, Dec 4, (AP): A week of volatile swings on Wall Street ended Friday with more losses for stocks, as a mixed batch of U.S. job market data triggered another bout of dizzying trading.

The S&P 500 closed 0.8% lower after erasing a 0.7% gain in the early going. The benchmark index was coming off a jolting stretch where it swerved by at least 1.2% in five straight days, pounded by uncertainty about how badly the newest coronavirus variant will hit the economy and about when the Federal Reserve will halt its immense support for financial markets.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average slipped 0.2% and the Nasdaq composite lost 1.9%. The Russell 2000 index of company stocks slumped 2.1%. All the indexes also posted a weekly loss.

Treasury yields fell, rose and then fell again as investors struggled to square what the jobs report means the Federal Reserve will do on interest rates. The erratic movements fit right in with a week where the S&P 500 swung from a 1.9% gain to a 1.2% loss in one day.

"We got some mixed messages on the data" from the jobs report, "and that can make for some messy markets," said Brian Jacobsen, senior investment strategist at Allspring Global Investments.

The report, which is usually the most anticipated economic data by Wall Street each month, showed employers added only 210,000 jobs last month. It was a disappointing result when economists were expecting much stronger hiring of 530,000, and it raised worries the economy may stagnate while inflation remains high. That's a worse-case scenario called "stagflation" by economists, and the omicron variant's arrival makes its likelihood more uncertain.

But other areas of the jobs report showed better strength. More people are coming back to the workforce, and the unemployment rate improved to 4.2% from 4.6%.

Those encouraging numbers helped Treasury yields briefly climb during the morning. But they also came from a section of the jobs report that usually takes a back seat in investors' eyes to the jobs-growth figure. That's because they come from different surveys, one of employers and the other of households, and many investors see the job-growth numbers as the more reliable ones historically.

"Today's non-farm payroll report looks messy to me," said Jamie Cox, managing partner for Harris Financial Group. "Best to wait for the revisions next month before sounding the stagflation alarm too loudly."

Some investors said the jobs report could ultimately push the Fed to get more aggressive about raising short-term interest rates off their record low. Others, though, said they expected the mixed report to have no effect, and the wide differences in opinion helped lead to the day's sharp swings in the market.

What the Fed decides is a huge deal for stocks because low interest rates have been one of the main reasons the S&P 500 has roughly doubled since the early days of the pandemic. Low rates encourage borrowers to spend more and investors to pay higher prices for stocks.

The Fed has already begun slowing, or tapering, its program to buy billions of dollars of bonds each month to support the economy and markets. Chair Jerome Powell jolted markets earlier this week when he said the Fed could wrap up its bond-buying program months before the June target it had been on pace for. That would open the door for the Fed to make the more impactful decision of raising short-term rates.

"With the headlines on omicron and then figuring out if a faster taper also means a sooner hike - and investors worrying if the Fed is going to make a mistake - it's to be expected we're going to see some of this volatility," said Allspring Global Investments' Jacobsen.

Consider the yield on the two-year Treasury, which is heavily influenced by investors' expectations for upcoming Fed actions. It fell, then recovered briefly, only to slide to 0.59%. That's down from 0.63% late Thursday.

The 10-year Treasury yield, which moves more on investors' expectations for upcoming economic growth and inflation, was likewise unsteady. It zigzagged immediately after the jobs report's release and fell to 1.36% by late afternoon, down from 1.44% Thursday evening.

About 60% of the stocks in the S&P 500 fell, with some of Wall Street's biggest recent stars offering the heaviest weights.

Microsoft fell 2%, Nvidia slid 4.5% and Tesla dropped 6.4%. They were part of a turnaround for high-growth companies that earlier had led the market on expectations they could keep growing even if the economy was slow.

Energy futures mostly fell. The price of U.S. crude oil slid 0.4%. Energy stocks fell broadly. Exxon Mobil dropped 0.6%.

All told, the S&P 500 fell 38.67 points to 4,538.43. The Dow dropped 59.71 points to 34,580.08. The blue chip index pinballed between a gain of 161 points to a loss of 375. The Nasdaq fell 295.85 points to 15,085.47, while the Russell 2000 gave up 47.02 points to 2,159.31.

Chinese ride-hailing service Didi Global Inc. said Friday it will pull out of the New York Stock Exchange and shift its listing to Hong Kong as the ruling Communist Party tightens control over tech industries.

The Securities and Exchange Commission has moved to require that U.S.-listed foreign stocks like Didi's disclose their ownership structures and audit reports, which could lead to some of them being delisted.

Markets around the world have swung through the week as investors struggle to handicap how much damage the newest coronavirus variant will ultimately do to the economy.

With few concrete answers about omicron, investors have been groping and sending markets back and forth as minor clues dribble out. Still to be determined are whether current vaccines are effective against the variant, whether people will be scared away from businesses because of it and whether already high inflation will worsen due to it.

Stocks were mostly higher in Europe and Asia after a broad rally on Wall Street as investors awaited U.S. employment and other data due out Friday.

Concerns over the spread of the new coronavirus variant and measures governments are taking to restrain it remained, but appeared to have been assuaged by reports that its symptoms seem to be mild and vaccines appear to protect against severe illness.

Germany's DAX advanced 0.7% to 15,361.76. The CAC 40 in Paris added 0.5% to 6,831.75 and Britain's FTSE 100 picked up 0.3% to 7,147.30.

In another blow for China's troubled property sector, Hong Kong-traded developer Kaisa Group said it had failed to get the required approvals from bond holders to extend the deadline on payment on $400 million of 6.5% offshore bonds. It had wanted to have the new notes be due on June 6, 2023 at the same interest rate.

Company has 274 projects globally

Amazon announces 18 new 'renewable' energy projects

SEATTLE, Dec 4, (Agencies): Amazon announced 18 new utility-scale wind and solar energy projects across the US, Finland, Germany, Italy, Spain, and the UK, totaling 5.6 gigawatts (GW) of procured capacity to date in 2021.

Amazon now has 274 renewable energy projects globally and is on a path to power 100% of its business operations with renewable energy by 2025-five years earlier than its original 2030 commitment.

These new utility-scale wind and solar projects bring Amazon's total committed renewable electricity production capacity to more than 12 GW and 33,700 gigawatt hours (GWh) when the projects become fully operational, or electricity output equivalent to powering more than 3 million US homes for a year.

The projects will supply renewable energy for Amazon's corporate offices, fulfillment centers, and Amazon Web Services (AWS) data centers that support millions of customers globally.

The projects will also help Amazon meet its commitment to produce the clean energy equivalent of the electricity used by all consumer Echo devices. The amount of clean energy produced by these projects will avoid the equivalent of the annual emissions of nearly 3 million cars in the US each year, or about 13.7 million metric tons.

Emissions

"We are moving quickly and deliberately to reduce our carbon emissions and address the climate crisis," said Kara Hurst, vice president of worldwide sustainability at Amazon. "Significant investments in renewable energy globally are an important step in delivering on The Climate Pledge, our commitment to reach net-zero carbon by 2040, 10 years ahead of the Paris Agreement. Renewable energy projects also bring new investment, green jobs, and advance the decarbonization of the electricity systems in communities around the world."

Following today's announcement, Amazon is the largest corporate buyer of renewable energy in the world, with 274 global projects including 105 utility-scale wind and solar projects and 169 solar rooftops on facilities and stores worldwide. The 18 new wind and solar projects announced today include:

Eight new projects across the US: Amazon added more than 1 GW of utility-scale solar projects in the US, including Amazon's first solar projects in Arizona and Georgia, and additional projects in Ohio, Texas, and Virginia. In total, Amazon has enabled more than 6 GW of renewable energy in the US through 62 projects.

A second solar project paired with energy storage: Based in Arizona, Amazon's second solar project paired with energy storage enables the company to align solar generation with periods of the greatest demand, even when the sun is not shining.

The 300-megawatt (MW) solar project is paired with a 150-MW battery energy storage system and brings Amazon's battery storage projects to 220 MW.

Four new renewable projects in the Nordics: Amazon added 158 MW through four wind projects in Finland, bringing its total renewable energy portfolio across the Nordics to more than 950 MW.

Additional projects in Italy, Spain, and Northern Ireland: Amazon's new solar project in Italy is the company's third in the country, adding 40 MW on top of the 66 MW already enabled.

In Spain, Amazon's four new solar projects together add more than 630 MW to the grid. A new wind project in Northern Ireland brings Amazon's portfolio to 245 MW on Ireland's all-island grid and its total U.K. portfolio to more than 545 MW of wind energy.

In total, Amazon has enabled more than 3.5 GW of renewable energy in Europe through 34 projects, making it the largest procurer of renewable energy in Europe. To see Amazon's renewable energy projects around the world, visit our interactive map.

Committed

"Amazon is wasting no time demonstrating that they are fully committed to a clean energy future for all," said Gregory Wetstone, CEO of the American Council on Renewable Energy. "At COP26, the world agreed we needed bigger and bolder ambitions around global carbon reduction from all sectors.

With hundreds of renewable energy projects already underway, Amazon is a model for the level of urgency and action we need from the private sector to combat the climate crisis."

"For the second year in a row, Amazon has set new records as it works toward fully powering its operations with renewable energy by 2025, five years ahead of schedule," said Miranda Ballentine, CEO of Clean Energy Buyers Association (CEBA).

"Large-scale clean energy investments like these benefit us all and should be the new normal for industries of all shapes and sizes. They bring good-paying, green jobs to local communities and support progress toward our community's goal of a 90% carbon-free US electricity system."

"Amazon's procurement of 12 GW of renewable energy capacity globally is a strong testament to the company's commitment to reaching net-zero carbon by 2040," said Hannah Hunt, impact director at RE-Source, a corporate renewable energy sourcing platform in Europe.

"The company's 10 new renewable energy operations across Europe will benefit communities, bring new green jobs, and help meet our commitments to curb the climate crisis."

Amazon and Global Optimism co-founded The Climate Pledge in 2019. The Pledge now has more than 200 signatories, including Best Buy, IBM, Microsoft, PepsiCo, Siemens, Unilever, Verizon, and Visa.

To reach its goal, Amazon will continue to reduce emissions across its operations by taking real business actions and establishing a path to power its operations with 100% renewable energy, five years ahead of the company's original target of 2030; delivering its Shipment Zero vision to make all Amazon shipments net-zero carbon, with 50% net-zero carbon by 2030; purchasing 100,000 electric delivery vehicles, the largest order ever of electric delivery vehicles; and by investing $2 billion in the development of decarbonizing services and solutions through the Climate Pledge.

Beijing tightens control over tech industries

Didi to leave US stock market amid tech crackdown

BEIJING, Dec 4, (AP): China's dominant ride-hailing service, Didi Global Inc., said Friday it will pull out of the New York Stock Exchange and shift its share trading to Hong Kong as the ruling Communist Party tightens control over tech industries.

Didi gave no explanation, but China's leaders increasingly fret about who controls information gathered about its public by e-commerce, ride-hailing and other tech companies. Beijing sees that as a valuable asset and security risk.

Regulators said in July they would step up scrutiny of tech companies with shares traded abroad and their information security and cross-border data flows. Didi's share price fell 25% after regulators launched an investigation into its handling of customer data following its June 30 stock market debut.

"After conscientious research, the company will start delisting operations on the New York Stock Exchange immediately and commence preparations to list in Hong Kong," Didi said on its social media account. A separate statement said U.S. shares would be converted into "freely tradable shares" on another "internationally recognized" exchange.

Hong Kong is Chinese territory but has a separate regulatory system that allows foreigners to invest in its stock market. Mainland markets are mostly off-limits to foreign capital.

Tech entrepreneurs who are largely shut out of the state-run financial system have raised billions of dollars abroad. But the ruling party worries about how that affects control of their companies. It is promising more access to capital within China.

Didi Chuxing raised about $4.4 billion in its market debut. The company earlier denied a news report it planned to buy back its U.S. shares.

Other companies including Alibaba Group, the world's biggest e-commerce company, and Tencent Holding, which operates the popular WeChat message service, also have been hit by data security and anti-monopoly probes.

Investor jitters about the crackdown have knocked more than $1 trillion off the total market value of Chinese tech companies on U.S. and other foreign exchanges.

Didi was founded in 2012 by Alibaba veteran Will Wei Cheng. Its president is Jean Qing Liu, a former Goldman Sachs managing director and the daughter of Liu Chuanzhi, founder of computer maker Lenovo Group.

It expanded abroad in 2018 by acquiring Brazil's 99 Taxis and set up operations in Mexico. Didi operates in 16 countries, though almost 90% of the 493 million customers who used the service at least once in the past year are in China.

Didi acquired rival Kuaidi in 2016 and Uber Technologies Inc.'s China operation the following year. Other competitors in the $50 billion-a-year market include Caocao Chuxing, a unit of automaker Geely, and Hello Chuxing, backed by Alibaba.

Following its investigation, China's cyberspace regulator said in July "serious violations" were found in how Didi collected and stored personal information. Didi was later ordered to remove 25 of its apps from online stores.

Chinese companies have sold shares abroad for two decades but regulators have yet to say whether their financial structures comply with rules that ban foreign ownership of internet companies and limit access to other industries.

The ruling party is trying to capture more of their value for the Chinese public by encouraging companies to sell shares on domestic markets.

Shares in a handful of mainland companies traded in Hong Kong can be bought by Chinese investors through mainland exchanges. Meanwhile, a stock exchange set up to serve entrepreneurs started trading Nov. 15 in Beijing.

A woman walks past the headquarters for Didi Beijing on July 16, 2021. Chinese ride-hailing service Didi Global Inc. said Friday, Dec. 3, 2021 it will pull out of the U.S. stock market and shift its listing to Hong Kong as the ruling Communist Party tightens control over tech industries. (AP)