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Holy day. Senior monks from the Hong Kong Buddhist Association and officials take part in the Buddha bathing ritual in the Convention and Exhibition Centre's Grand Hall during the opening ceremony of a three-day celebration to mark Buddha's birthday, which falls today. www.scmp.com

Exhibition Centre's Grand Hall during the opening ceremony of a three-day celebration to mark Buddha's birthday, which falls today. www.scmp.com

Launch of aviation company is first step in plan for domestic airliner

China gets plans rolling for jumbo jet

BY SHENYI IN SHANGHAI
 China yesterday launched a company that Beijing hopes will add a long, solid chunk of jumbo jets to the country's fleet, a move that will help it to compete with other nations like the United States and Europe in the global market for large aircraft.

The state-owned Aviation Industry Corporation of China (AVIC) yesterday announced the formation of a new company, the Commercial Aircraft Corp of China (CAC), in a ceremony in Shanghai. The company will be based in the mainland's commercial capital, although the state is assembling a small number of aircraft.

The state-backed company will be responsible for manufacturing, developing, testing and marketing a new line of large passenger planes, which the

launch of the company will be a first step in the plan to build the regional jet, but the market for the jumbo jet is still the primary focus. Although the regional jet is planned to be developed in parallel, it is expected to be completed later than the jumbo jet, according to industry sources.

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TVB to fight mainland streaming

Celebrity designer throws accessory 'lifebuoys' to the rich and pampered

If you watch *Desperate Housewives*, you may have noticed the chic handbags worn by the "housewives", including Eva Longoria and Felicity Huffman. The clothes, the bags, they're likely to be from celebrity designer Charlie Lapson, who is in town for a few days from Los Angeles.

We caught up with him at the grand opening of the exhibition East/West at the two-storey Sundaram Tagore Gallery on Hollywood Road.

Lapson is hoping to bring his Hollywood-inspired collections to the mainland market. He sells high-end jewellery, accessories and handbags in the US, and works around the clock as a celebrity wardrobe "rescuer", receiving calls at 3am or 4am, wherever he is, from celebrities freaking out because they're having a bad-hair day.

"My phone rings around the world," he said. "A lot of people have stylists in Hollywood and they do trust their stylists, but sometimes they look in the mirror and go: 'Oh my god! What happened?' So they

call me to rescue them. They will go: 'Can you get me some jewellery, can you bring me a handbag or can you fix my hair and makeup too?'

Lapson's ability at doing makeup stems partly from his time at university, where he studied to become a professional painter/sculptor.

When he graduated from college at 16, he was already a regular at the nightclubs in New York. He was impressed with the clothes people wore, so began to make sketches, and by 18 was selling his clothes across the Big Apple.

Lapson has been designing for 20 years. He said the key to successfully bonding with his celebrity clients was to stay polite and charming. As a "sculptor", he said his favourite bodies to work with for his designs were Angelina Jolie and Longoria.

At Cityseen, we're handing around the collection plate so Charlie can rescue our celebrity wardrobes. Time to call the lifeboats.

