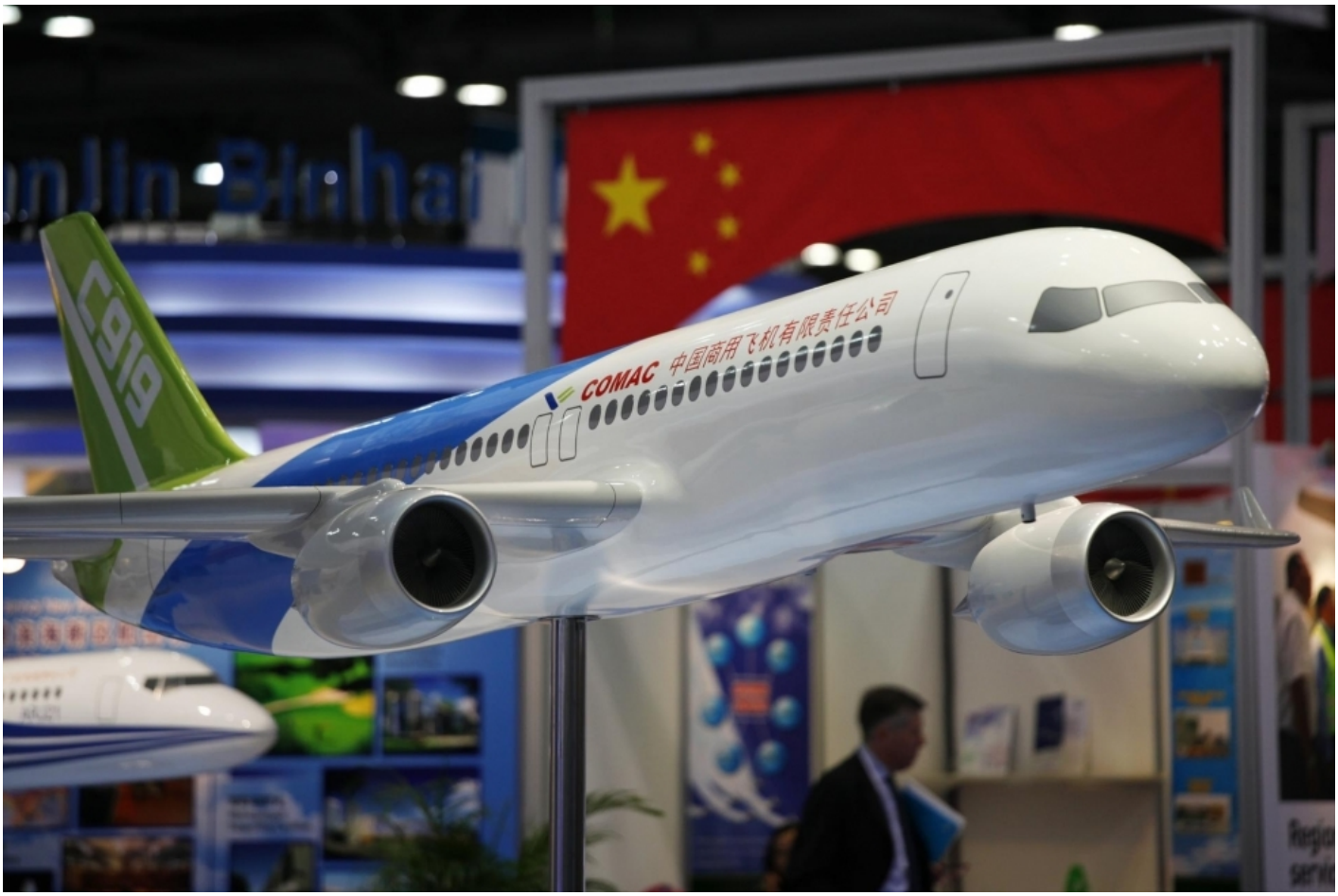
CHINA'S FIRST LARGE HOMEMADE PASSENGER JET TO FLY IN 2017

News / Manufacturer



Chinese state media say the country's first large homemade passenger jetliner will take to the air for its maiden flight in the first quarter of this year.

The ruling Communist Party newspaper People's Daily said Monday that Commercial Aircraft Corp. of China Ltd., or Comac, had nearly completed work on the 175-passenger C919.

The plane is to enter the market in 2019 in competition with the Airbus A320 and Boeing 737, along with the Russian Irkut MC-21.

Airbus and Boeing say the market for new aircraft will be worth more than $5 trillion over the next 20 years. Industry experts say China faces a tough slog capturing a significant share of that market, even with government support.

Company officials couldn't immediately be reached.

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The C919 is part of China's efforts to develop a homegrown aviation industry in one of the world's biggest and fastest-growing air travel markets. China currently relies heavily on foreign-made aircraft.

Last June, the ARJ21-700, China's first homemade regional jet, made its debut flight carrying 70 passengers. The jet is one of a series of initiatives launched by the party to transform China from the world's low-cost factory into a creator of profitable technology in aviation, clean energy and other fields.

The ARJ21, also made by Comac, is a rival to aircraft made by Bombardier Inc. of Canada and Brazil's Embraer SA.

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