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Fixed Based Operator – Helicopter operations in China

China now has its very own helicopter airport in Nanjing, the capital city of Jiangsu Province. After four years of unremitting efforts, Ruo Hang Nanjing Laoshan Helicopter Airport, the first helicopter airport under Ruo Hang Transportation Development Co., Ltd was granted the civil helicopter airport license on January 8 after an inspection by the Civil Aviation Administration of China.

To mark the airport's official opening, on February 6, the first business helicopter AW119 landed at the airport. "We plan to bring in more high-performance business helicopters to provide emergency rescue, air patrol, business flying and other helicopter air traffic services to relevant enterprises, private customers and government agencies in Nanjing and its neighbouring areas in Jiangsu Province," said Lu Yong, Executive Director of Ruo Hang Transportation Development Co., Ltd, full of expectations for the airport's future development. Ruo Hang Nanjing Helicopter Airport is located in the Laoshan Mountain Area, 5 kilometres away from the No.3 Bridge over Yangtze River in Nanjing.

In the depth of the mountains sits a spacious area for helicopter takeoff and landing. Ruo Hang Transportation Development Co., Ltd is the first private aviation enterprise mainly engaged in the building and operation management of general aviation airports in China. The company plans to gradually establish helicopter airports in economically-developed cities in East China and build up the general aviation network in the Yangtze River Delta Area.

Ruo Hang Nanjing Helicopter Airport is scheduled to cover an area of more than 40,000 square metres, with eight garages designed on the parking apron to hold about 10 medium-sized helicopters in total. The five-storey airport command centre will be established close to the parking apron. "The whole airport now has a total investment of over RMB60 million and the parking apron covering an area of about 8,000 square metres has been completed with the flight platform in the middle covering a diameter of 46.5 metres, which can even serve the takeoff and landing of the Mi-26, one of the largest helicopters in the world."

Lu Yong says. "By the end of this year, Ruo Hang Nanjing Helicopter Airport is expected to have nine helicopters, including five trainers with double seats and four business jets with double engines."

Scheduled for completion next year, the Ruo Hang Suzhou Helicopter Airport is designed for many functions: one is for helicopter parking – for example, when heading from Suzhou to Shanghai, the helicopter could stop in on the parking lot on the top of buildings or by waters in Shanghai and have to return to Suzhou for fueling and maintenance.

Suzhou will be "home" to helicopters. Another function is for air shows – unlike the Zhuhai Air Show, the Suzhou Air Show will focus on helicopter demonstration and become an important platform for helicopter sales throughout the country. This means powerful enterprises in Suzhou no longer have to travel far to attend air shows. The third function is training – the helicopter airport can be used for pilot training.

Qualified aviation fans could apply for a pilot's license just as they do for the driving license. Lu Yong says the number of helicopters in East China will grow to more than 1,800 in the next five or seven years, but there will be few helicopter airports.

In addition to the emergency rescue, business use, private and business flying, the helicopter airport network of Ruo Hang in East China is able to provide a series of services such as air weddings, air travel, demonstration and sales of helicopters, pilot training and the establishment of aviation member clubs.

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