

China's first professional cargo hub airport begins operations

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Ezhou Huahu Airport has begun operations as China's first "professional cargo hub airport".

The airport in central China's Hubei Province is also the first professional cargo hub airport in Asia, according to China's state press agency [Xinhua](#).

A Boeing 767-300 cargo plane took off to mark the start of operations at the airport, which features a 23,000 sq m cargo terminal, a nearly 700,000 sq m freight transit centre and two runways to improve airfreight transport efficiency.

Logistics service provider SF Express holds a 46% stake in Hubei International Logistics Airport Co., Ltd., the operator of Ezhou Huahu Airport.

SF has independently built the freight transport transit centre, a cargo sorting centre and an aviation base at the new airport. SF Express also plans to process the majority of its packages through the new airport in the future.

“As a cargo hub, Ezhou Huazhu Airport will help SF Express to form a new comprehensive logistics network,” said Pan Le, director of the airport’s IT department.

The airport has opened two cargo routes to Shenzhen and Shanghai and is scheduled to add international routes connecting with Osaka in Japan and Frankfurt in Germany within this year.

It is expected to open around 10 international cargo routes and 50 domestic routes by 2025, with air cargo and mail throughput reaching 2.45m tonnes.

The project team behind the airport have applied for more than 70 patents and copyrights for new technologies, such as 5G, big data, cloud computing and artificial intelligence, for making the new airport safer, greener and smarter.

Automation is also being invested in. “We’ve spent nearly a year testing unmanned vehicles in designated areas on the apron, aiming to build an unmanned apron in the future,” Le said.