



China tests new magnetic-levitation train

First maglev train to be locally made can travel up to 100 mph

The Associated Press

Updated: 12:12 p.m. ET May 1, 2006

BEIJING - China successfully tested a locally made magnetic levitation train, the first time the country has achieved the feat without using foreign technology, state media reported Monday.

The 20-ton test maglev train ran steadily Sunday on a 1,400-foot experimental line in the provincial capital of Chengdu, the capital of southwestern Sichuan province, the official Xinhua News Agency said Monday.

The test train can hold 60 people and travel up to 100 mph, Xinhua reported, citing Zhang Kunlun, deputy director of the School of Electrical Engineering at the Southwest Jiaotong University in Chengdu.

The maglev train was developed by a research team at the university, one of China's key engineering schools, Xinhua reported. The technology uses powerful magnets to suspend a train above a track and propel it at high speeds.

The cost of the Chinese maglev train is low, and it is suitable for urban traffic, Zhang said.

"The successful test of the train shows that China has mastered the technology of low-to-medium speed maglev trains," he was quoted as saying.

China is home to the world's first commercially operating maglev train, which links one of Shanghai's airports with the city's financial district.

The rail line was built with German technology. Japan had lobbied China to use its Shinkansen bullet train technology for the line, while France pitched its TGV system.

The Chinese government said earlier that work will begin this year on a second maglev line linking Shanghai and the resort city of Hangzhou, a \$4.4-billion, high-speed line that can run trains at up to 280 mph.

The new line, due to launch by 2010, will cut travel time from Shanghai to Hangzhou to a half-hour from the current two hours.

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