

Maglev train nears completion in Beijing



A maglev train undergoes testing recently on Beijing's new S1 line, which is scheduled to open later this year. [Photo/China Daily]

Beijing's first mid- to low-speed magnetic levitation railway line is preparing for its debut later this year.

Services on Line S1 will run from Shimenyong station in western Mentougou district to Pingguoyuan station in Shijingshan district, a transfer station for Line 1.

The maglev line will have eight stations stretching over 10.2 kilometers and will run at a maximum speed of 100 kilometers per hour. The whole journey will take about 20 minutes, including the time for passengers to get on and off.

The train, manufactured by CRRC Tangshan Co in Hebei Province, has six cars and is designed to carry 1,032 passengers at a time.

According to the company, 10 trains will be put into use in the first stage of operation.

The main feature of the maglev train is that it doesn't have wheels, unlike the current metro trains. That makes it more comfortable and safer, according to CRRC Tangshan.

Using electromagnetic forces, the trains are elevated about 1 centimeter

above the tracks, avoiding friction and resulting in a smooth ride.

Tracks are specially designed to prevent the trains from overturning or derailling, the company said.

The Chinese Academy of Sciences' Institute of Electrical Engineering was quoted by China Central Television as saying that the magnetic fields of the maglev trains have less effect on human health than TV sets.

The debugging process for Line S1 is expected to end in November, followed by a monthlong trial run, said Sun Hechuan, deputy general manager of Beijing Enterprises Holdings Maglev Technology Development Co.

The country's first domestically designed and manufactured maglev line began operating a year ago in Changsha, capital of Hunan province.