

CHINA / Regional

Shanghai maglev train catches fire

By Cao Li (China Daily)

Updated: 2006-08-12 05:39

SHANGHAI: A maglev train caught fire yesterday afternoon as it arrived at the terminal, but was extinguished an hour later. No deaths or injuries were reported.

According to a statement from the Shanghai municipal government, a compartment caught fire at 2:40 pm as the train reached the Longyang Lu terminal from the Shanghai Pudong International Airport. Passengers were evacuated immediately.

A witness, who lives nearby, said the burning train was then driven out of the station. He refused to give his name.

"I saw the train, with smoke billowing from a compartment, leaving the Longyang terminal slowly and stopping about 1 kilometre away," he said.

"Fire trucks and ambulances arrived soon after and a person climbed down from the driver's compartment using a ladder.

"I heard that a compartment caught fire when the train was in the terminal and it was driven out to avoid setting fire to the platform.

"I saw other trains moving in and out of the station, even when the train was still on fire," he said.

According to the statement, the fire did not affect the operation of the other maglev line and it was brought under control one hour later.



Firefighters attempt to extinguish a fire of a maglev train in Shanghai August 11, 2006. [Xinhua]

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A preliminary investigation has excluded the possibility of foul play, but the cause of the fire has not yet been released. Further investigation is under way, according to the statement.

The maglev rail line, connecting the Pudong International Airport to the Line 2 subway, began operation on December 31, 2002.

The magnetic train covers a distance of 30 kilometres. Former German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and former Chinese Premier Zhu Rongji took the maiden journey.

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