

# Haramain Express Train trial successful

## Deputy governors of Makkah and Madinah participate in pilot trip

### ARAB NEWS

**JEDDAH: On behalf of Makkah Gov. Prince Khaled Al-Faisal, Prince Abdullah bin Bandar, deputy governor of Makkah, participated on Tuesday in a pilot trip of the Haramain Express Train.**

Also present were Transport Minister Sulaiman Al-Hamdan; Spanish State Secretary for Infrastructure, Transport and Housing Julio Gomez; President of the Saudi Railway Organization (SRO) and Chairman of the Public Transport Authority Rumaih Al-Rumaih; and a number of other top officials and media personnel.

The Haramain Express will transport passengers from Makkah to Madinah (and vice-versa), via Jeddah and King Abdullah Economic City. The railway is around 450 km in length, and will offer a fast-paced, comfortable and secure transportation option for travelers passing through Jeddah and King Abdullah Economic City. The train is expected to be fully operational during the first quarter of 2018.

On its pilot trip, the Haramain Express first ran from Jeddah to King Abdullah Economic City (KAEC) station in Rabigh, which was toured and inspected. The train then continued its journey toward Madinah at a speed of over 300 km per hour.

Prince Saud bin Khaled Al-Faisal, deputy governor of Madinah, received the train upon its arrival at Madinah Station on behalf of Madinah Gov. Prince Faisal bin Salman, and boarded the train for its return journey to Jeddah.

Al-Hamdan explained that the speed at which this large-scale national project — one of the largest transportation projects in the Middle East — has progressed would not have been possible without the ongoing support of King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and support of the governors of Makkah and Madinah, and the support of the Public Investment Fund.

“The project represents substantial added value to the transportation system in the Kingdom, and is in line with one of Vision 2030’s objectives — to harness energies and potential to serve the guests of God by increasing the capacity of the systems and services provided to them.”

Such services include transportation, he said, noting that the number of pilgrims and visitors to the Two Holy Mosques is predicted to increase from 8 million to 30 million people by 2030.

The minister went on to explain that the design of this project was based on the latest global specifications for high-speed railways, and features the highest safety and quality standards. The fully operational Haramain Express is expected to transport more than



**Prince Abdullah bin Bandar bin Abdul Aziz, center, deputy governor of Makkah region, arrives at Haramain Express Train station in Jeddah. (SPA)**

60 million passengers annually.

For his part, Al-Rumaih said that the inauguration of the new railway will reduce pressure and limit pollution and

congestion on roads between the two holy cities, while also providing a safer and faster transportation option.

The train’s travel time between

Jeddah and Makkah will be around 21 minutes. It will take less than two-and-a-half hours to travel between Makkah and Madinah.