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The latest rail news on Thursday, 11th February 2021

The branch of HS2 linking Birmingham to Leeds will go ahead as planned, Prime Minister Boris Johnson says.

That is according to an article in The Daily Mirror. The National Infrastructure Commission had suggested it could be downgraded, with the proposed Eastern leg instead terminating at East Midlands Parkway.

But the paper says that Mr Johnson confirmed he intends to press on with the project at yesterday's PMQs.

Meanwhile the article also says that HS2 protestors in tunnels near Euston Station yesterday lost a High Court bid to block an operation to evict them.

The pressure to increase Tube and bus fares annually will become "almost intolerable" unless there are radical changes to the way London's transport network is funded, the capital's transport chief has warned.

An article in the Evening Standard reads that Andy Byford said annual rises in fares would be "self-defeating" as they would drive passengers back into cars and lead to a "downward spiral" of underinvestment.

His warning came as London Tories joined a cross-party call to Transport Secretary Grant Shapps for the £500 million paid by the capital's motorists in vehicle tax to be returned by the Government to provide long-term funding for Transport for London.

From Saturday until Friday 19th February the line from Southampton Central to Brockenhurst and Romsey will close as engineers finish a £17 million upgrade for freight services.

Since the end of January, engineers have worked around the clock between Southampton Central and Redbridge, remodelling lines used by freight trains to access the Port of Southampton.

Almost a mile of new track, 22 new signals and 14 new sets of switches and crossings – which allow trains to move between tracks – have been installed to transform both the railway and the way freight services are handled.

[Click here for more details.](#)

Finally, and Northern is trialling a new innovative app that will help customers get speedier care if they become ill on board any of the rail operator's trains.

The Unwell Passenger app, developed by York-based rail technology specialists, Incremental Solutions, gives step-by-step instructions to support staff on trains to help passengers who become ill or are injured.

[Click here for more details.](#)

Photo credit: Network Rail