

In The News: 14th July

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The delivery of HS2 is 'unachievable' within budget and on time, a government watchdog has said according to an article in several of the national newspapers today.

The Infrastructure and Projects Authority, which assesses major projects, has given HS2 a red rating for the first time since its annual reports began in 2013.

In response, a Department for Transport spokesman said the report refers to the status of the HS2 project in September 2019, before it was comprehensively reset in February 2020.

HS2 Ltd says the work in the past 12 months now means that the cost and schedule estimates for Phase One are the most robust they've ever been.

The Government is facing renewed demands to make a decision over the long-term future of the temporarily nationalised rail industry.

An article in today's Evening Standard features comments from Labour peer Lord Adonis saying many of the private rail firms are on the verge of bankruptcy so state control should continue until there is a better alternative.

Westminster effectively nationalised the railways at the start of the virus crisis, spending more than £3.5 billion to ensure services would continue running during a six-month emergency period which ends in September.

London's new transport commissioner has vowed to get commuters back on the Tube and buses, saying it was vital for the city's future prosperity.

Andy Byford said his priorities for his first two years in charge were getting Transport for London back on an even keel financially by restoring passenger numbers to pre-Covid levels, and getting Crossrail open.

Finally, and the upgrade of the first of 20 Avanti West Coast Voyagers is due to be completed later this month.

The trains, which operate over the non-electrified sections of the West Coast Main Line in addition to running from London to Scotland, are being overhauled following an £8.3 million deal which was signed with Bombardier last year.

[More details here.](#)

Photo credit: Avanti West Coast