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InTheNews Sponsored by **Petards Rail**: The latest rail news on Thursday, 25th January 2024

Hopes are rising that a future Labour government could breathe fresh life into a new rail line between Birmingham and Manchester after Rishi Sunak scrapped the planned HS2 link last year.

An article in the i newspaper says Industry figures are growing increasingly optimistic that a line could be continued from Handsacre, north of Birmingham, where phase 1 of HS2 will terminate, to Manchester.

Proposals are being drawn up for a private-sector-led replacement to phase 2 of HS2 after a new consortium was assembled by Andy Burnham and Andy Street, the Labour Mayor of Greater Manchester and Conservative West Midlands Mayor.

Train drivers across Germany have begun a strike that is set to last for six days, their longest stoppage on record.

An article on the BBC website says the walk-out, called by the GDL rail drivers' union, hit passenger trains from 02:00 on Wednesday but goods-train drivers were also involved.

Millions of Germans were caught up in the action as the union escalated a long-running dispute with state-owned Deutsche Bahn.

The latest strike marks the fourth round of action since November. The union is seeking higher wages to make up for a rise in inflation as well as a cut in the working week from 38 to 35 hours with no cut in salary.

Potential alternative East West Rail routes through Bedfordshire should be made public, councillors said.

An article on the BBC website says the project would link Oxford and Cambridge via a new section of track between Bedford and Cambridge.

Bedford Council previously voted to support “Route E” through the north of town, but the Liberal Democrat said other routes should be made public.

Construction has now formally begun on HS2 Birmingham Curzon Street station - the northern end of the route.

An article on The Construction Index says that according to HS2 Ltd, Birmingham Curzon Street Station will be the first intercity terminus station built in Britain since the 19th Century.

Main contractor Mace Dragados Joint Venture (MDJV) has been in stage one of the contract since 2021, working to develop the detailed programme.

This week it has now begun major earthworks to prepare the site for piling and foundations work in the spring, with construction of the main station building, designed by WSP and Grimshaw Architects, due to start in the summer.

Photo credit: HS2 Ltd