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The Government should admit social distancing on trains is “not possible”, the transport select committee chairman urged, as he warned overcrowding was frightening commuters.

An article in The Daily Telegraph says Huw Merriman argued that ministers could avoid “panic” on the rail network by making travellers aware of the measures they could take to lower the risk of catching COVID-19 at busy times.

Speaking at a Railway Industry Association event at the Conservative Party conference, he said it would

help improve confidence.

HS2 has awarded a major contract to design and manufacture the modular track system to a partnership which includes PORR UK Ltd and Aggregate Industries UK.

The £260m deal will see the slab track segments manufactured at a new factory near Shepton Mallett in Somerset helping to create up to 500 jobs over the life of the contract.

[Click here for more details.](#)

An ambitious new train operator, SLC Operations Ltd, has announced that it has been granted a non-passenger train licence by the Office of Rail and Road.

This means that the company can now operate trains across the national rail network and opens up new possibilities for the SLC group of companies.

SLC Operations has already secured contracts with Vivarail to accumulate mileage for the new Class 230s and to run seasonal rail head treatment trains in the West Midlands for Balfour Beatty.

[Click here for more details.](#)

Finally, and Network Rail is working with technology startup nPlan to use Machine Learning technology across its portfolio of projects, potentially transforming the way major rail projects are delivered.

Through using data from past projects to produce accurate cost and time forecasts, the partnership will deliver efficiencies in the way projects are planned and carried out.

In a world-first for such work on this scale, Network Rail tested nPlan's risk analysis and assurance solution on the Great Western Main Line and Salisbury to Exeter Signalling project.

Photo credit: Network Rail

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