Part-nationalisation on forum agenda
Bidders' withdrawal threat is 'henceless'  
By Jim Pickard, Chief Political Correspondent
Labour has insisted that part-nationalisation of the railway system will not scare away private companies, claiming operators would rather "cut their own throats" than withdraw.
Ed Miliband's radical plan for the railways, to be announced at a conference this weekend, involves creating a state-owned operator that would be able to compete in most franchise competitions as companies come up for renewal. The Labour leader will also face vocal calls from his party's grassroots and unions at the one-off policy conference to scrap the Trident nuclear deterrent, repeal private companies from the National Health Service and scrap tuition fees.
Last week Martin Griffiths, chief executive of Stagecoach, said part-nationalisation would deter transport companies from bidding for rail franchises. Bidders already had to pay up to £1bn to take part in each competition, he said, which was not recouped if they did not win.
But one senior Labour MP dismissed his warning, saying the industry would not react like that, given that the British rail system was one of the most "open" in the world. "They can afford to spend a few million here and there on bids," the MP said. "It's nonsense to suggest they wouldn't be able to afford to compete."
Rail policy is expected to dominate this weekend's Labour "national policy forum" in Milton Keynes. Jon Cruddas, head of the party's policy review, has promised that by Sunday Labour will have agreed "the foundation of our manifesto", if not the document itself.
Keeping track
£10m
Top sum bidders have paid to take part in competition
3%
Train operators' estimate of their profit margin
City blockbusters feature in Stirling Prize shortlist
 Architecture
By Edwin Heathcote
The shortlist for the Stirling Prize, Britain's most prestigious architectural award, was announced today - and is more impressive than it has been for years. The list consists of a skyscraper, two educational institutions, two civic buildings and, oddly, a pool built for the 2012 Olympics. It is certainly the shortest with the most recognizable buildings in the prize's 19-year history.
The most visible candidate is the 30m-high, Shard, western Europe's tallest tower. Designed by Renzo Piano, it is a building that has radically altered London's skyline. Piano's tower is joined on the Six by the London School of Economics' Saw Swee Hock Student Centre, a concrete, crumpled, folded brick building emblematic of the German fabric of London's Holborn. Designed by British architects O'Donnell + Tuomey is a slimy, constituent response to a difficult site but also a project that has given the students' union centre an organic, urban identity. The other educational building is Feilden Clegg Bradley's new extension to Manchester School of Art. Staying in northwest England, the shortlist also includes Haworth Tompkins' excellent renovation and rebuilding of Liverpool's Everyman Theatre. This pivotal local institution, once languishing in the ramshackle remains of a chapel and its surroundings, has been rehoused in a functional, elegant structure.

Maudé urges mandarins to be more candid with ministers
By Sarah Neville, Public Policy Editor
The UK civil service is more hierarchical than the military: David Maudé has attempts to strike a different agenda to that of their government masters. Last week the Financial Times reported that three leading Treasury officials, including the head of public spending and the chief of departmental officials, are expected to leave government. Maudé's departure comes as the government begins to prepare for the next election, and is expected to shake up the Treasury's top brass. The appointment of a new chief of departmental officials, who is expected to be a former civil servant, will also add to the uncertainty. Since the coalition government came to power, not one Treasury secretary, wrote to the PAC to express a dissatisfaction with the current state of public spending. Separately, an internal Whitehall document leaked to the BBC's Andrew Marr show said that the Treasury was "not confident in the government's ability to deliver on its spending plans."

Aerospace
£154m for Farnborough
Public funds
The UK aerospace industry will be given £154m pounds to support new technologies such as 3D printing of aircraft parts, with the government announcing the funding today.
Mark Clegg, deputy prime minister, will be keen to secure a larger role for UK research and development in the aerospace sector, which owns a 15% share of the global market and is expected to grow to 20% within five years. The Office of Rail Regulation, which has managed the railways for the past year, will now be managed by the Department for Transport.