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OVER-THE-ROAD-BUS INTELLIGENCE AWARENESS DAILY (OTRBIAD) REPORT

February 7, 2025

SUSPICIOUS ACTIVITY & INCIDENT REPORTS

SEPTA Train Fire Forces About 350 Passengers To Evacuate At Crum Lynne Station; Service Resumes *CBS, 2/6/2025*

[Philadelphia, Pennsylvania] About 350 passengers were evacuated amid a fire on a SEPTA train at Crum Lynne Station in Ridley Park on Thursday night, officials said. The fire started under the first car of the train, and passengers evacuated at the station located at 350 West Ridley Avenue in Delaware County, according to SEPTA. Once the fire was reported around 6 p.m., the crew worked quickly to evacuate passengers, SEPTA Director of Media Relations Andrew Busch said. After everyone was out, crew members noticed the first car was engulfed in flames, he said. SEPTA service has resumed on the Wilmington/Newark Regional Rail line, Busch said. Amtrak service between Philadelphia and Wilmington has resumed as well, but there could be lingering delays, Amtrak said. The cause of the fire is under investigation, Busch said. Footage from SEPTA cameras and interviews with the crew will be part of the investigation. <https://www.cbsnews.com/philadelphia/news/septa-train-fire-delays-regional-rail/>

Suspect Sought After Subway Rider Punched In Anti-Asian Hate Crime: NYPD *PIX 11, 2/6/2025*

[New York] A 54-year-old woman was punched on a subway in what police are calling an anti-Asian hate crime. The incident happened around 8 p.m. on a southbound 1 train approaching the 59th Street – Columbus Circle subway station on Jan. 16. Police say the suspect, an unknown woman, approached the victim, made anti-Asian statements towards her, and punched her in the head. The victim was taken to a local hospital. The suspect fled the subway station. The NYPD released a surveillance photo of the woman. <https://pix11.com/news/local-news/manhattan/suspect-sought-after-subway-rider-punched-in-anti-asian-hate-crime-nypd/>

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TERRORISM & EXTREMISM

Russia Supported Sabotage Spree In Germany To Roil Election Campaign, Report Says *POLITICO, 2/5/2025*

[Germany] German investigators believe that a wave of car vandalism across Germany, initially blamed on radical climate activists, is actually part of a Russian-orchestrated sabotage campaign, according to a Spiegel report published Wednesday. More than 270 vehicles were damaged in Berlin, Brandenburg, Bavaria and Baden-Württemberg. Saboteurs sprayed construction foam into car exhaust pipes, rendering vehicles unusable, local police departments told Spiegel. To throw investigators off the scent, the vandals plastered cars with fake eco-stickers featuring Economy Minister Robert Habeck's face and slogans like "be greener!" According to authorities, their goal was to stoke public outrage against Germany's Green Party ahead of the national election on Feb. 23. Since invading Ukraine in 2022, Russia has ramped up sabotage operations across Europe, targeting critical infrastructure like undersea cables and even plotting assassinations of defectors and European weapons-makers.

<https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-hit-by-suspected-russia-backed-sabotage-campaign/>

ANALYST COMMENTARY: The 2025 German federal election will be held on 23 February 2025, and in recent weeks, criminals have been caught sabotaging vehicles across Germany by filling vehicle exhaust pipes with expanding hard setting foam and leaving behind stickers as calling cards. The stickers depict Germany's Vice-Chancellor Robert Habeck, who is also the Green Party's chancellor candidate in the upcoming federal election and bear the message: "Be greener!" German law enforcement believe that the sabotage campaign is actually a false flag operation being run by Russia, intending to blame environmentalists and the German Green Party and influence the upcoming election by sowing discord among voters. Over 240 vehicles have been sabotaged this way, and police have announced four arrests - a German, a Serb, a Romanian and a Bosnian aged 17, 18, 20 and 29 - in connection with at least 120 of the incidents. According to police, one of the men told investigators that a Russian had reached out to them over social media, asking them to carry out the attacks and offering to pay them €100 for each car vandalized. The Russian also allegedly promised the men "several thousand euros and assured legal support" if they were caught, though it does not seem that the men received the promised aid. The German government has refused to comment on the incidents, pending the results of the investigation; however, this incident does align with known Russian tactics. Recently, Germany's domestic intelligence services, Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz or BfV, warned that they had increasingly observed a trend of Russian actors recruiting petty criminals in Europe "to carry out acts of espionage and sabotage in return for money." Thus far, the trend of petty criminals being paid to conduct sabotage operations by adversary states has not been reported in the U.S. despite the tactic having seen success overseas.

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Australia Introduces Mandatory Jail Time For Hate Crimes Following Surge In Antisemitism

CNN, 2/6/2025

Australia has introduced strict laws to combat hate crimes, introducing mandatory minimum sentences for a range of terrorism offenses and displaying hate symbols, following a spate of antisemitic attacks in Sydney and Melbourne. The new laws passed Thursday toughen punishment for hate crimes, including minimum six-year prison sentences for terrorism offenses, and at least 12-month sentences for less serious hate crimes – such as giving a Nazi salute in public. The legislation also creates new offenses for threatening force or violence against targeted groups and people based on their sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, religion or ethnicity. The changes were first proposed by Prime Minister Anthony Albanese's Labor government last year amid an uptick in antisemitic attacks and calls for tougher penalties for offenders. At the time, the proposed legislation didn't include mandatory sentencing, which Albanese has previously vehemently opposed. However, this week the government finally relented following criticism from Albanese's political opponents that he wasn't doing enough to combat antisemitism. <https://www.cnn.com/2025/02/06/australia/australia-hate-crime-mandatory-jail-time-intl-hnk/index.html>

SECURITY & SAFETY AWARENESS

What Is 50501? What To Know About Movement Sparking Protests Around The US

USATODAY 7, 2/5/2025

Protesters gathered around the U.S. Wednesday in a coordinated effort originating from social media known as the 50501 movement. "50501 is a call for 50 protests in 50 states on 1 day," reads a website that lists the protests across the country and encourages people to spread its anti-Trump messages online. Protest organizers describe the push as a "decentralized rapid response to the anti-democratic, destructive, and, in many cases, illegal actions being undertaken by the Trump administration and his plutocrats," the "Build the Resistance" website states. ...A post in the 50501 subreddit Wednesday morning claims the movement has evolved in less than two weeks, amassed 72,000 participants, and planned 67 protests across 40 states. <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/politics/2025/02/05/what-is-50501-protest-movement/78248832007/>

Labor Groups Back Transit Reform Giving RTA Expanded Authority Over CTA, Metra, Pace

Chicago Sun Times, 2/6/2025

A new police force would patrol CTA, Metra and Pace routes under a sweeping transit reform bill introduced Thursday with the backing of a coalition of influential Illinois labor unions.

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The proposal from the Labor Alliance for Public Transit would also give the Regional Transportation Authority stronger financial oversight over those agencies while requiring their board members to have the transit expertise needed for their posts — but each agency would remain autonomous.

That's a departure from critics calling for a merger of the agencies under one state body, as lawmakers grapple with the \$750 million-plus fiscal cliff facing the agencies starting in 2026.

<https://chicago.suntimes.com/transportation/2025/02/06/cta-transit-fiscal-cliff-reform-labor-bill>

Increased Security Leads to Drop in Crime on Valley Metro Light Rail

All About Arizona, 1/28/2025

[Phoenix, Arizona] Valley Metro attributes a significant decrease in crime along its light rail system to recent enhancements in its security operations. Riders like Yosta Enga, a student from Indonesia attending Arizona State University, rely on Valley Metro's buses and light rail daily. Without a car, Enga depends on the light rail for transportation but admits she avoids riding at night due to a past unsettling encounter. "That night, I was really scared," Enga recalled. Despite the incident, she continues to use the system. "I don't have a choice," she said. Approximately 30,000 passengers use the light rail each day. In 2023, Valley Metro reported to the City of Phoenix that assaults on light rail passengers occurred almost every other day on average, often involving individuals who knew each other. ... Valley Metro's recent data shows a more than 15% reduction in security incidents, including assaults, property crimes, robberies, and aggravated assaults, between the first and second halves of 2024.

<https://www.allaboutarizonanews.com/increased-security-leads-to-drop-in-crime-on-valley-metro-light-rail/>

Kids In New York Keep Dying While 'Subway Surfing' On Top Of Trains

ABC News, 2/6/2025

[New York] Ka'Von Wooden loved trains. The 15-year-old had an encyclopedic knowledge of New York City's subway system and dreamed of becoming a train operator. Instead, on a December morning in 2022, Ka'Von died after he climbed to the roof of a moving J train in Brooklyn and then fell onto the tracks as it headed onto the Williamsburg Bridge. He is one of more than a dozen New Yorkers, many young boys, who have been killed or badly injured in recent years while attempting to "subway surf," a practice that dates back a century but has been supercharged by social media. Authorities have tried to address the problem with public awareness campaigns and by deploying drones to catch thrill-seekers in the act. ... Making trains harder to climb, and train surfers more easy to detect with cameras and sensors, could be part of the solution, some experts say. The Metropolitan Transportation Authority, which operates the subway system, has said it is studying the issue. But it has yet to come forward with proposals to use technology or physical barriers that might make it harder for people to get on top of trains. <https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/kids-new-york-dying-subway-surfing-top-trains-118558764>

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ANALYST COMMENTARY: The New York City Police Department (NYPD) and the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) are using a multi-pronged approach to try and curb the practice of subway surfing, including public information campaigns, specialized enforcement efforts, surveillance cameras, and drones, and appeals to social media companies to remove content that may be seen as glorifying the surfers. Six people died during subway surfing incidents in New York in 2024, up from the five who died in 2023. Over 300,000 school children use the New York subway system every day, and in 2024, law enforcement arrested 229 alleged subway surfers, up from 235 in 2023. The average age of the surfers was about 14 years old, and about a fifth of those arrested are repeat offenders. Recently, the NYPD reported successes in stopping subway surfing acts by getting indicators of surfers with their cameras and 911 calls, then launching a drone to observe the incident in real time which communicates with responding police and MTA personnel who step in to stop the incident before injury occurs. In many cases, the NYPD does not prioritize arrests and instead notifies the parents of the children's actions and shows them the video footage of the incident. MTA CEO Janno Lieber has also reported that NYPD analysts are checking social media websites every day to ensure that videos are being deleted from social media in an attempt to remove the incentive.

Third Teen Arrested Following R Train Joyride In Queens Subway

PIX 11, 2/6/2025

A 15-year-old boy was arrested on Thursday in connection with a group of kids who took an R train on a joy ride through the subway in Queens, according to authorities. The teen will face charges of reckless endangerment, criminal mischief and criminal trespassing. He's the third teenager to be arrested this week in connection with the incident after another 15-year-old boy and 17-year-old boy were taken into custody on Monday. Police say a group of six entered the subway at the Forest Hills-71 Avenue station on Jan. 25 just before 10:30 p.m. The kids then drove the train for an unknown distance and damaged its security camera by marking it, officials report. Despite damaging the cameras, the group was still caught on video entering the train. Police are still searching for the three others who may be involved and are offering up to \$3,500 for information that may lead to an arrest. <https://pix11.com/news/local-news/third-teen-arrested-following-r-train-joyride-in-queens-subway/>

CYBERSECURITY

Attackers Increase Use of HTTP Clients for Account Takeovers

Infosecurity, 1/30/2025

Cybercriminals have been observed increasingly leveraging legitimate HTTP client tools to execute account takeover (ATO) attacks on Microsoft 365 environments. Recent findings from Proofpoint reveal that 78% of Microsoft 365 tenants faced at least one ATO attempt in 2024 utilizing a distinct HTTP client.

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This marks a 7% rise in such attacks compared to the previous six months. Proofpoint researchers have observed a long-term trend of attackers repurposing widely available HTTP client tools to execute malicious activities. These tools, originally designed for web development and automation, are now being used for brute-force attacks and adversary-in-the-middle (AiTM) techniques. In 2018, attackers used an uncommon OkHttp client version (okhttp/3.2.0) in a sustained campaign lasting nearly four years. By 2021, this method peaked at tens of thousands of monthly attacks before declining. Since early 2024, newer HTTP clients, such as python-request and Axios, have become more prominent.

<https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/attackers-increase-use-http/>

ANALYST COMMENTARY: Attackers leveraging legitimate HTTP clients for Microsoft 365 account takeovers is an example of how cybercriminals exploit everyday tools to bypass security measures. The growing use of Axios, Node Fetch, and other clients shows a shift toward automation and efficiency and allows attackers to scale their operations with minimal effort. Axios's 43 percent success rate with adversary-in-the-middle (AiTM) techniques is concerning because it demonstrates that traditional MFA implementations are increasingly ineffective against well-executed interception tactics. This reinforces the need for phishing-resistant MFA methods like FIDO2 security keys or passkeys, rather than just OTP (Over the Phone)-based authentication. The shift from OkHttp to newer clients like python-requests and Go Resty also suggests that attackers are continuously experimenting with different tools to evade detection. This adaptability means organizations must go beyond static detection methods and implement behavioral analysis and anomaly detection in their authentication processes. Additionally, the education sector's exposure to Node Fetch brute-force attacks shows the dangers of weak passwords in low-security environments—something that should be addressed with stricter access policies and passwordless authentication. To counter these threats, organizations should monitor HTTP client activity, implement risk-based authentication, and deploy threat detection. Blocking outdated or unusual HTTP client versions could also add another layer of defense. Given the trend toward automated attack frameworks, credential-based authentication alone is no longer enough to protect against current cyber threat actors.

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