

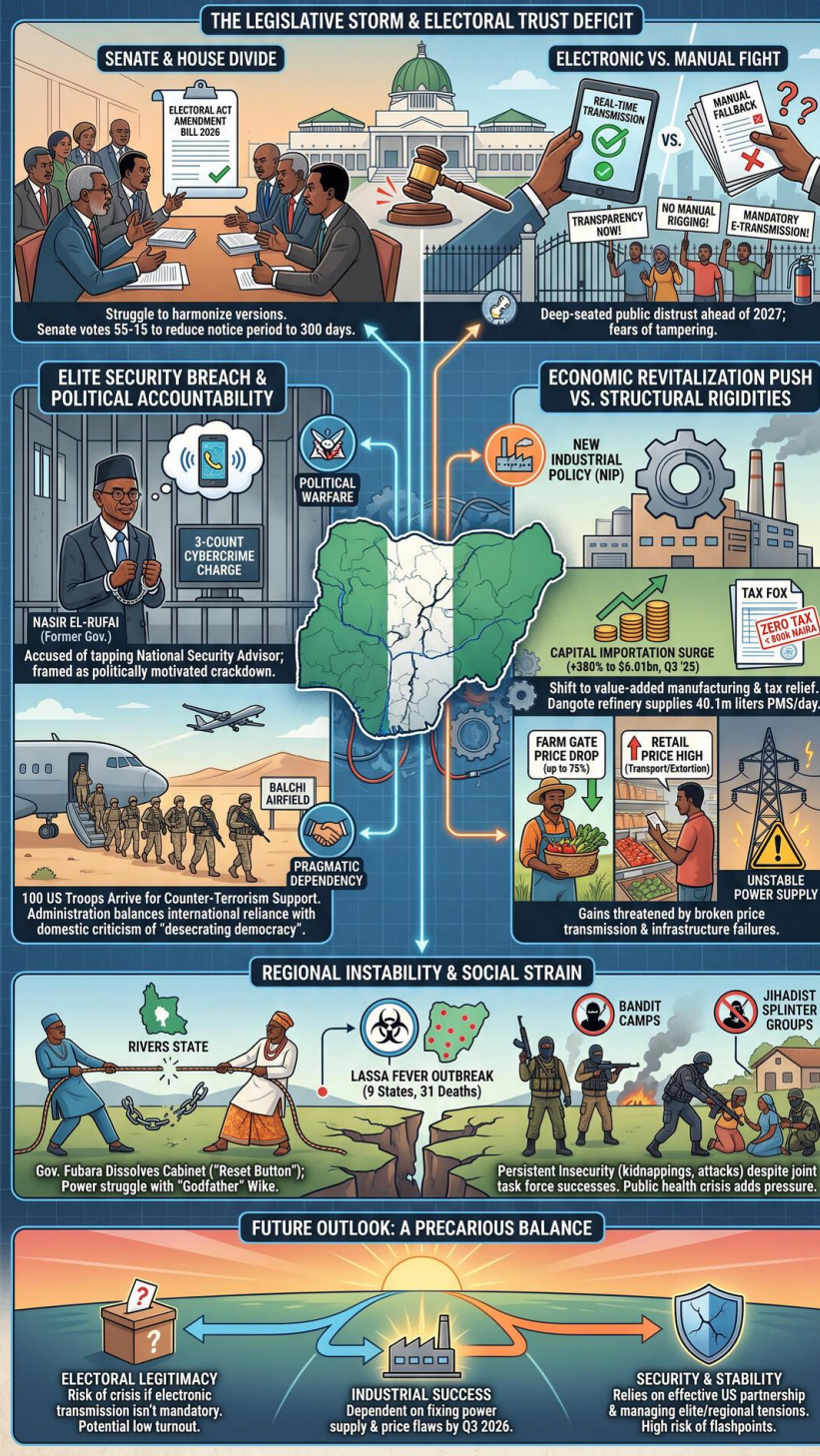
TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

TVCNEWS

FEBRUARY 17, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

NIGERIA 2026: A NATION IN HIGH-STAKES TRANSITION & TURMOIL



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NIGERIA MANEUVERS THROUGH A
HIGH-STAKES LEGISLATIVE
OVERHAUL OF THE ELECTORAL
ACT WHILE GRAPPLING WITH
ELITE-LEVEL SECURITY BREACHES
AND AN AGGRESSIVE PUSH FOR
INDUSTRIAL REVITALIZATION AMID
PERSISTENT REGIONAL
INSTABILITY.

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

The broadcast cycle for February 17, 2026, reveals a Nigerian state in a period of intense institutional activity and political volatility. The National Assembly is at the center of a storm regarding the **Electoral Act Amendment Bill 2026**, with the Senate and House of Representatives struggling to harmonize versions of the bill, particularly regarding the **mandatory electronic transmission** of results and notice periods for elections. This legislative tension is mirrored on the streets by protesters demanding transparency and within the chambers by opposition walkouts, signaling a deep-seated trust deficit ahead of the 2027 general elections.

Simultaneously, a major legal and security drama has unfolded with the detention of former Kaduna Governor **Nasir El-Rufai**. Facing a three-count charge of **cybercrime** for allegedly tapping the phone of National Security Advisor Nuhu Ribadu, El-Rufai's situation is being framed as a test of executive accountability and a potentially politically motivated crackdown on a prominent opposition voice. This development coincides with the arrival of **100 United States military personnel** at Balchi airfield to provide technical and advisory support for Nigeria's ongoing fight against insurgency, highlighting the administration's reliance on international security partnerships even as it faces internal criticism for "desecrating democracy" during domestic protests.

On the economic front, the administration is pushing a **New Industrial Policy** designed to shift Nigeria from an extraction-based economy to a value-added manufacturing hub. This is bolstered by reports of a **380% rise in capital importation** in late 2025 and new tax legislation providing relief for low-income earners. However, these gains are threatened by structural rigidities, such as unstable power supply and the "nature of capitalism" where price drops at the farm level are not reaching consumers. The convergence of these events suggests an administration attempting to build long-term economic legitimacy while managing immediate, high-stakes political and security crises.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

Electoral Act Amendment Controversy

- The Senate passed the **Electoral Act Amendment Bill 2026** with 55 senators in support and 15 opposed, notably reducing the [election notice requirements](#) from 360 to 300 days.
- Chaos erupted in the House of Representatives during emergency seatings as members disagreed over [manual fallback provisions](#) for electronic transmission of results.
- Public pressure from civil society and protesters at the gates of the [National Assembly](#) demands that electronic transmission be made mandatory and "real-time" to prevent manual collation tampering.

Criminal Charges Against Nasir El-Rufai

- The Federal Government filed a [three-count criminal charge](#) against the former governor for unlawful interception of communications belonging to the National Security Advisor.
- El-Rufai allegedly admitted to the tapping on national television, which analysts suggest constitutes a [voluntary confession](#), making it difficult for his defense.
- Separate probes by the Kaduna House of Assembly into **432 billion naira** in [misappropriated loans](#) add to his legal jeopardy.

US Military Deployment and Anti-Terrorism Efforts

- Defense headquarters confirmed the [arrival of 100 US personnel](#) serving in advisory and training capacities, specifically for reconnaissance and counter-terrorism intelligence.
- The United States imposed fresh sanctions on [eight Nigerians and three companies](#) for alleged links to Boko Haram, signaling a crackdown on terrorism financing.
- Joint security task forces [dismantled three bandit camps](#) in Kogi State, neutralizing several bandits and rescuing kidnapped victims.

New National Industrial Policy and Tax Reform

- The administration unveiled a [New Nigerian Industrial Policy](#) (NIP) aimed at reviving dormant factories and harmonizing multiple tax levies.
- The **Nigerian Tax Act 2025** has set a **800,000 naira** threshold below which individuals pay [zero personal income tax](#).
- The Dangote refinery has begun supplying **40.1 million liters** of PMS per day to the [domestic market](#), aimed at reducing the national import bill.

Regional Political Crises

- In Rivers State, Governor Sim Fubara [dissolved the executive council](#), interpreted as a "reset button" in his ongoing power struggle with former governor Nyesom Wike.
- Internal fissures within the APC in Delta State led to calls to [suspend ward congresses](#) due to allegations of exclusion.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Leadership Dynamics & Governance

- The tension between the executive and legislative arms is evident in the emergency recalls to address [drafting inconsistencies](#) in the Electoral Act.
- The Fubara-Wike rift in Rivers State is characterized as a **"state of capture"** where local government chairmen and lawmakers remain [beholden to a "godfather"](#) figure rather than the sitting governor.

Macroeconomics & Trade

- Nigeria's capital importation rose to **6.01 billion dollars** in Q3 2025, an [increase of 380%](#), though 80% of this was portfolio investment rather than direct foreign investment.
- The **Naira** is reportedly [strengthening against the dollar](#) due to central bank reforms and the "B-match" trading platform.

Terrorism & Asymmetric Threats

- The presence of **Starlink** is suggested as a solution for [electoral transmission](#) in areas where base stations have been [destroyed by bandits](#).
- Jihadist splinter groups continue to [target homes and kidnap victims](#) in Niger State, despite increased security operations.

Global Health & Biosecurity

- A Lassa fever outbreak has spread to nine states, with [31 deaths and 165 confirmed cases](#) in just five weeks.

- Childhood cancer survival rates in Nigeria remain low at **20%**, compared to 80% in developed nations, due to [late presentation and misdiagnosis](#).

Diplomacy & Statecraft

- African Union leaders adopted a historic resolution designating **November 30th** as a tribute day for [victims of slavery and colonialism](#), while emphasizing the need for **internal innovation** to combat "new colonialism."

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Crisis of Electoral Trust The central theme of the day is the systemic lack of trust in the electoral process. The legislative battle over ["real-time" vs. "mandatory"](#) electronic transmission reflects a belief that manual intervention equals fraud. Lawmakers are caught between technical realities (93% 2G/3G coverage) and a public that views any [manual fallback](#) as a "life from the pit of hell" intended to facilitate rigging. This narrative is further complicated by the use of [tear gas on protesters](#) at the National Assembly, which opposition figures frame as a "desecration of democracy."

The "Godfather" vs. The "Godson" Paradigm Governance in Nigeria continues to be plagued by the friction between incumbent governors and the mentors who installed them. The Rivers State situation is the primary example, where the ["reset button"](#) of dissolving the cabinet is a desperate attempt to gain autonomy. Analysts describe this as a **"political slave agreement"** that forces governors to abandon their own supporters for those of their [predecessors](#), creating institutional paralysis.

Accountability as Political Warfare The legal pursuit of Nasir El-Rufai is being debated through two lenses: a necessary move against a [national security threat](#) (phone tapping the NSA) and a "**pre-election year**" tactic to [silence a vocal critic](#). The simultaneous investigation into multi-billion naira loan misappropriations suggests a multifaceted strategy to dismantle his political influence before the 2027 cycle begins.

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

Institutional decay is evident in the [emergency sessions](#) of the House, which suggest that major laws are passed with "drafting inconsistencies" that require immediate recall. Polarization is deepening; the [55-to-15 vote split](#) in the Senate on the Electoral Act signals a solidified opposition bloc. Public sentiment is increasingly volatile, as evidenced by the [mass protests](#) and the vocal social media reaction to the **16-year presidential term proposal** by Senator Kenneth Ese, which was widely rejected as an attack on democratic checks and balances.

Societal stability is further strained by regional security failures. In Kaduna and Niger states, [jihadist attacks](#) and ["scamishes" at airports](#) suggest that while the federal government claims "major breakthroughs," the operational reality for citizens remains one of fear and restricted movement. The Lassa fever outbreak adds a layer of **public health instability** to an already stressed governance environment.

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

Nigeria's global posture is one of **pragmatic dependency**. The state is aggressively courting the US for [counter-terrorism help](#), welcoming 100 troops while balancing this against a domestic narrative of sovereignty. The "outside world" is framed as both a source of [sanctions against bad actors](#) and a competitor in the "new colonialism" where Africa must [exploit its own resources](#) to avoid being a "rented continent."

Nigeria is also positioning itself as a regional industrial leader through the **African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCFTA)**. By launching the [New Industrial Policy](#) and using the Dangote refinery to stabilize the currency, the government seeks to shift from a "hostile threat matrix" to a "**zone of economic opportunity**." However, the framing of US Secretary of State Marco Rubio's [praise for imperialism](#) shows lingering skepticism toward Western diplomatic intentions.

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The economic outlook is a mix of positive macro indicators and micro-level hardship. Capital inflows are up, and inflation shows a slight easing, but price transmission remains flawed.

Key Economic Vectors

- **Capital Importation: \$6.01 billion** in Q3 2025, a [380% increase](#) year-on-year.
- **Inflation:** Eased to **15.10%** in January 2026, down from 18.63% in December, primarily due to [food price drops](#).
- **Commodity Prices: Brent Crude** futures at \$68/barrel; **WTI** at \$63.16/barrel. [OPEC basket](#) at \$66.62.

- **Tax Policy:** Consolidation of multiple levies and a [zero-tax bracket](#) for those earning under 800,000 naira annually.
- **Agriculture:** Farm gate prices for items like garri have dropped by [as much as 75%](#), but retail prices remain high due to extortion and transport costs.

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The landscape is shifting as the administration clears paths for the 2027 cycle.

- **Nasir El-Rufai: Loser.** Facing [criminal charges](#) and multiple investigations; his political future is in extreme doubt.
- **Nuhu Ribadu (NSA): Winner.** His office is at the center of the US military collaboration and the legal take-down of a major rival.
- **Sim Fubara: In Transition.** By [dissolving his cabinet](#), he is attempting to purge "godfather" influences, but he faces a hostile legislature and local government structure.
- **Estha Monu: Symbolic Winner.** Honored as ["One Day Governor"](#) of Lagos to promote educational excellence.

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The network's editorial posture is **cautiously optimistic regarding the state** and **aggressive regarding accountability of rivals**. The "Lead Stories" focus on the [Electoral Act](#) and [El-Rufai's detention](#), prioritizing high-drama political events. Economic news is presented with a reassuring tone, focusing on the **"success" of reforms** despite data showing that much of the capital importation is volatile portfolio money. The

tone regarding US troop arrival is [nationalistic](#), framing it as Nigeria "leading" the partnership.

Conspicuous Omissions: There is a lack of deep technical analysis on **Starlink's actual costs** and deployment feasibility for INEC. Furthermore, the broadcast fails to give substantial airtime to the [Lassa fever outbreak](#) relative to political news, despite the climbing death toll. There is also a notable absence of direct comment from **El-Rufai's legal team** or the **opposition caucus** regarding the specific evidence of phone tapping.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The subtext reveals a world of opportunistic alliances and internal purges.

COUNTRIES

- **Nigeria:** Portrayed as a **resilient, stabilizing** regional power that is finally "walking the talk" on security and industry. Quote: "Nigeria is on the path to [overcoming its security challenges](#)."
- **United States:** Portrayed as a **competent but demanding** ally. Friend in counter-terrorism, but a "foe" in the historical context of imperialism. Quote: "The Americans are [stepping in to try and help](#)... but Nigeria is a country of particular concern."
- **China:** Portrayed as an **unreliable partner** whose infrastructure projects (Belt and Road) have left Africa "waiting with baited breath" for benefits that [rarely materialize](#).

LEADERS

- **President Tinubu:** Portrayed as **principled and intentional**. Quote: "This president is [very intentional](#) and wants to do what he wants to achieve."
- **Nasir El-Rufai:** Portrayed as **corrupt and chaotic**. Quote: "He has been [embuddled with controversy](#) from its beginning and double standard."

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

Information is being weaponized in the debate over ["real-time" electoral results](#). Partisan factions are seeding the narrative that anything less than instantaneous transmission is an **organized rigging plot**. Conversely, the government uses [selective leaks](#) from the El-Rufai interrogation to build a public case before the trial begins. The delta between the media spin (that the economy is "stabilizing") and the ground truth (farmers making ["losses" despite record harvests](#)) suggests a coordinated effort to manufacture economic consent.

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **The El-Rufai Trial as Political Cleansing:** The charges will likely expand beyond cybercrime to **insurrection**, effectively barring him from any 2027 political role and serving as a warning to other defectors to the ADC or other parties.
- **Electoral Act Paralysis:** If the "real-time" transmission isn't codified as mandatory, the 2027 elections will face a **pre-emptive legitimacy crisis**, likely leading to a record-low turnout.

- **Industrial Policy Bottleneck:** The NIP will fail if the [unstable power supply](#) isn't addressed by Q3 2026, as manufacturers will continue to spend more on generating power than on primary goods.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks)

- Intense legal battles for El-Rufai's bail, likely rejected on national security grounds.
- Escalation of Lassa fever cases requiring federal emergency funding.
- Further [cabinet reshuffles](#) in Rivers State as Fubara tests his new autonomy.

Medium Term (1-6 Months)

- Launch of the [NIP incentive framework](#), with early adopters in the banking and agro-processing sectors.
- Joint US-Nigerian military operations in the Lake Chad basin yielding [high-profile neutralizations](#).
- Finalization of the Electoral Act, likely with a **watered-down electronic clause** to accommodate infrastructure gaps.

Long Term (1-5 Years)

- A structural shift in the fuel market as the [Dangote refinery](#) supplies dominate, potentially leading to the privatization of NNPC refineries.
- Possible constitutional crisis if the **16-year term proposal** gains any more legislative traction.

RISK ASSESSMENT

The current environment is highly reactive, with several potential flashpoints.

- **Electoral Delegitimacy:** Trigger: Passage of an Electoral Act that allows wide manual discretion. Likelihood: High. Impact: Extreme; potential for widespread post-election violence in 2027. Mitigation: Adopt Starlink/satellite tech for the [7% of uncovered areas](#).
- **Regional Insurrection:** Trigger: Conviction of El-Rufai leading to [religious tension](#) in Kaduna. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: High; breakdown of order in Northern Nigeria. Mitigation: Ensure transparent, non-partisan judicial process.
- **Public Health Crisis:** Trigger: Failure to contain [Lassa fever](#) spread to urban centers like Lagos/Abuja. Likelihood: High. Impact: Moderate-High. Mitigation: Urgent upgrade of community clinic level diagnostics.
- **Energy Infrastructure Failure:** Trigger: [Bandit attacks](#) on major oil/gas pipelines in the Niger Delta. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: Extreme (economic collapse). Mitigation: Deployment of drones and [kinetic military operations](#).
- **Economic Stagflation:** Trigger: Disinflation in agriculture [bankrupting local farmers](#) while retail prices remain high. Likelihood: Moderate. Impact: High (food insecurity). Mitigation: Government-guaranteed minimum prices for essential crops.

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- **Technological Viability:** No data on whether the **INEC IR portal** can actually handle 13 million simultaneous "attacks" or if the infrastructure upgrade is purely rhetorical.
- **El-Rufai Evidence:** Lack of direct evidence presented in the broadcast regarding the **"toxic chemical"** allegations mentioned by the NSA.
- **Foreign Direct Investment:** While capital importation is up, the [breakdown](#) shows less than 5% is **Direct Investment**, a critical detail buried in the report.
- **Security Operational Limits:** No mention of the **Rules of Engagement** for the [100 US troops](#) and how "strictly advisory" will be defined in active conflict zones.

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

The "Controlled Opposition" Hypothesis

The detention of El-Rufai and the "chaos" in the House are **choreographed events** designed to give the illusion of a robust democracy and accountability while the ruling elite consolidates power through the Electoral Act notice period changes.

The "Hot Money" Economic Trap The 380% rise in capital importation is not a sign of health but a **speculative bubble** in portfolio investments. Once the high interest rates are lowered, this "hot money" will exit, causing a sudden and catastrophic crash of the Naira.

Black Swan Event: The National Grid Collapse A simultaneous strike by labor unions (NLC/TUC) and a cyber-attack on the power grid by ["digital crime" threat actors](#) could paralyze the country for weeks,

rendering the New Industrial Policy and the electronic electoral system completely moot.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- **Security:** Leverage the [100 US troops](#) specifically for training in electronic reconnaissance to protect voting base stations.
- **Economic:** Implement a **retail price monitoring board** to ensure farm-gate deflation reaches consumers.
- **Diplomatic:** Use the **November 30th** tribute to slavery victims to lead a pan-African coalition for **reparations**, boosting global leverage.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chain:** Diversify logistics to use the [Ororon maritime corridor](#) to bypass high-risk road transport in the North.
- **Regulatory:** Audit all **corporate communications** to ensure compliance with the new [cybercrime statutes](#) regarding communication interception.
- **Capital Allocation:** Pivot toward **agro-processing** to take advantage of low farm-gate prices and the new NIP incentives.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The legislative agenda is dominated by structural reforms to the electoral and financial systems, though execution is hampered by significant [intra-chamber discord](#) and public unrest.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Electoral Act Amendment Bill 2026:** Strategic intent is to adjust the [election calendar](#) and codify transmission procedures.
- **Nigerian Tax Act 2025:** Intent is to [consolidate taxes](#) and provide relief to low earners (below 800k).
- **Reserved Seats Bill:** A women's representation initiative to [increase female seats](#) in parliament over the next four cycles.
- **Tainted Glass Act:** A bill to [upgrade specialized colleges](#) to university status.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Budget Defense Sessions:** The Ministry of Steel and Ministry of Works faced [tense exchanges](#) over project accountability.
- **Joint Committee on Electoral Matters:** Met to harmonize the [contentious clauses](#) (28, 60, 84) of the Electoral Act.
- **National Community Food Bank Launch:** A high-level event unveiling [nutrition interventions](#) for children and mothers.

KEY STORIES

- **Senate Passes Electoral Act:** Bill reduces notice period to 300 days; [passed 55 to 15](#).
- **Nasir El-Rufai Detained:** Former governor [faces charges](#) for tapping NSA Nuhu Ribadu's phone.
- **US Military Arrival:** 100 personnel land at [Balchi airfield](#) for technical advisory roles.
- **Rivers Cabinet Dissolved:** Governor Fubara initiates a ["reset" of his administration](#).

- **Lassa Fever Outbreak:** 31 deaths and 165 cases confirmed across [nine states](#).
- **Capital Importation Surge:** \$6.01 billion recorded in Q3 2025; [380% increase](#) reported.
- **House Emergency Plenary:** Disagreements over [electronic transmission](#) lead to a walkout.
- **US Terror Sanctions:** Eight Nigerians and three firms sanctioned for [links to Boko Haram](#).
- **Ororon Maritime Project:** Construction of new [marine terminal and jetties](#) in Akwa Ibom.
- **Kogi Security Breakthrough:** Three [bandit camps dismantled](#); victims rescued by joint task force.
- **New Industrial Policy Launch:** Framework to revive [dormant factories](#) and harmonize taxes.
- **One Day Governor of Lagos:** Student Esta Monu [honored for excellence](#) in education.
- **Childhood Cancer Awareness:** Survival rates in Nigeria [remain dangerously low](#) at 20%.
- **Edo Local Governance:** 54 construction units handed over to [18 local governments](#).
- **FIFA Ruling:** Super Eagles' 2026 World Cup [protest against Congo](#) dismissed.
- **Champions League News:** Real Madrid faces Benfica; [Mbappe returns](#) from injury.
- **Lagos Nightlife Safety:** New ["Nightlife Squad"](#) of 250 police officers deployed.
- **Delta APC Conflict:** Norbert Suchuku Dima [dismisses claims of exclusion](#) in ward congresses.
- **AU Slavery Tribute:** Resolution for [November 30th](#) as colonial victim remembrance day.

- **Sibling Hair Dispute:** Social media controversy over a [sister-in-law shaving children's hair](#).

ABOUT THIS REPORT

Today's Media Trends is a public interest experiment in applying deep thematic trend analysis to television news coverage from around the world to explore how responsibly applied advanced AI can help journalists and scholars better understand the overarching trends, themes and patterns of our global world.

No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

Each morning, in collaboration with the Internet Archive's TV News Archive, we apply Google's Gemini 3 to deeply examine yesterday's coverage from each television news channel to tease out the overarching themes and trends of its news coverage into a richly annotated thematic analysis. Each high-level insight is connected back to the original broadcast, allowing journalists and scholars to understand the dominate themes and trends and instantly click out to the underlying sources for details.

By helping journalists and scholars see the broader trends and patterns of global news coverage, this analysis helps them identify relevant stories and coverage they might not otherwise have encountered and uncover connections, emphases and narrative shifts that enable more comprehensive reporting and deeper, evidence-based research.

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