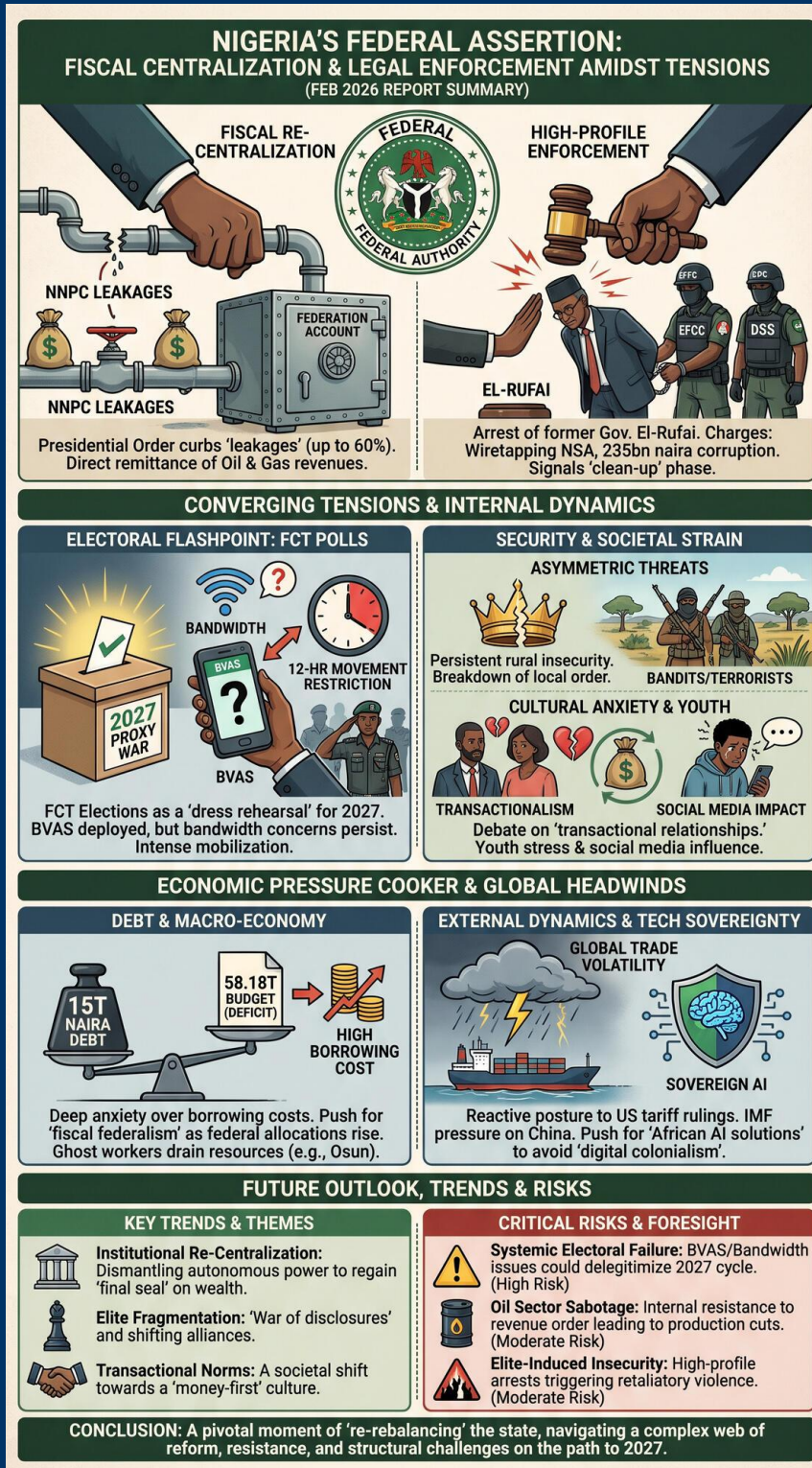


TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

TVCNEWS

FEBRUARY 20, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

TVCNEWS

FEBRUARY 20, 2026

NIGERIA ASSERTS FEDERAL AUTHORITY THROUGH FISCAL CENTRALIZATION AND HIGH- PROFILE LEGAL ENFORCEMENT AMIDST LOCAL ELECTORAL TENSIONS

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

February 20, 2026, marks a pivotal moment in the Tinubu administration's efforts to consolidate state power and enforce fiscal discipline. The dominant narrative centers on two aggressive maneuvers: a presidential executive order stripping the Nigerian National Petroleum Company (NNPC) of its ability to withhold oil revenues and the dramatic arrest and detention of former Kaduna Governor Nasir El-Rufai. These actions suggest a "clean-up" phase intended to satisfy international observers and a disillusioned electorate, yet they are unfolding against a backdrop of local instability, characterized by the murder of a traditional ruler in Ondo State and high-stakes preparations for the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) area council elections.

The administration is currently navigating a complex "re-rebalancing" of the Nigerian

state. By forcing oil revenues directly into the federation account, the government is attempting to bypass decades of institutionalized leakage that has crippled the national budget. Simultaneously, the legal pursuit of El-Rufai for alleged cybercrimes and wiretapping signaling a hardening of internal security protocols. This domestic focus is coupled with a defensive posture toward global economic shifts, specifically reacting with "deep disappointment" to the US Supreme Court's ruling on tariffs, which impacts Nigeria's trade calculus.

Converging with these governance shifts is a societal debate over "transactionalism" in personal relationships and the impact of social media on youth behavior, reflecting a broader cultural anxiety. The news cycle portrays a nation at a crossroads: attempting to modernize its economy through AI and infrastructure (such as the Delta State flyover) while being constantly pulled back by the "ghost workers" of legacy corruption and persistent asymmetric threats from bandits and terrorists in the North and Southeast.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Presidential Directive on Oil Revenue Remittance:** President Tinubu issued an executive order requiring NNPC to remit all oil and gas revenues directly into the federation account, citing Section 44(3) of the constitution to curb "leakages" estimated to have consumed up to 60% of potential revenue. [proceeds to be paid](#)

- **Detention of Former Governor Nasir El-Rufai:** Following his release by the EFCC, El-Rufai was immediately re-arrested by the ICPC and faces DSS charges for alleged wiretapping of National Security Advisor Nuhu Ribadu and involvement in a 235 billion naira corruption case. [wire tapping the phone](#)
- **FCT Area Council Elections Readiness:** The Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) declared full readiness for the February 21 polls, deploying 3,345 Bimodal Voter Accreditation System (BVAS) machines amidst a 12-hour movement restriction in Abuja. [readiness for the FCT](#)
- **Enactment of the Electoral Act Amendment 2026:** Despite sharp partisan debate, the 2026 amendment was signed into law, though critics argue it undermines the mandatory electronic transmission of results. [side into law](#)
- **Global Trade Volatility:** Nigeria expressed concern over a US Supreme Court ruling striking down tariffs, viewed as a blow to protectionist interests while the IMF urged China to slash state support for its industry. [strikes down Donal](#)

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Leadership Dynamics & Governance: The administration is utilizing "executive orders" as a primary tool to bypass legislative slow-walking, particularly regarding NNPC reforms. However, the appointment of Nollywood actress Mercy Johnson Okojie as a Special Advisor signals a continued reliance on "celebrity optics" to bridge the gap between government and the grassroots. [appointed special advisor](#)

Legal Warfare & Regulatory Risk: The simultaneous involvement of the EFCC, ICPC,

and DSS in the El-Rufai case highlights a multi-agency approach to neutralising political rivals or high-profile offenders. Critics and analysts are debating whether this is genuine "prosecution or persecution," especially given the timing relative to the 2027 election cycle. [prosecution or persecution](#)

Macroeconomics & Trade: The 2026 budget defense revealed deep anxieties over the "high cost of borrowing" and a debt profile estimated at 15 trillion naira. The Finance Minister is pushing for "fiscal federalism" where states take more responsibility for development as federal allocations increase. [high cost of boring](#)

Terrorism & Asymmetric Threats: The brutal murder of a monarch in Ondo State, where assailants reportedly used "sticks and other things" when bullets failed to penetrate his "charms," underscores a persistent breakdown in local social order. [killing the traditional rule](#)

Tech Sovereignty & AI: Stakeholders at the Innovate AI Conference in Lagos are advocating for "Sovereign AI," stressing the importance of creating AI models using local Nigerian data to avoid "digital colonialism" and ensure institutional safety. [talking about sovereign AI](#)

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

Institutional Re-Centralization: The most significant trend is the systematic dismantling of the "autonomous" power of agencies like the NNPC. By invoking constitutional control over minerals and natural gas, the presidency is attempting to regain the "final seal" on national wealth. This is framed as a necessary

response to "incorrigible hatred for the truth" by those who claimed refineries were non-functional when they were merely unprofitable. [NMPC retains 30%](#)

The "2027 Proxy War": While the FCT elections are local, they are being treated as a "dress rehearsal" and a "political barometer" for the 2027 general elections. The intense mobilization by the FCT Minister and opposition figures indicates that the federal capital is the primary battleground for testing voter behavior and the efficacy of the new Electoral Act. [serve as a litmus test](#)

The Transactional Nature of Post-Modern Nigeria: A pervasive theme across multiple segments is the shift toward transactionalism in everything from oil contracts to romantic relationships. The social debate regarding men reclaiming gifts after breakups and the alleged "grooming" of children reflects a societal concern that the moral fabric is being replaced by a "money-first" culture. [relationships are transactional](#)

INTERNAL DYNAMICS & DOMESTIC INSTABILITY

The Nigerian state is currently grappling with a "crisis of trust" between the electorate and political parties. The defection of lawmakers to the ruling APC is framed as "opportunism" rather than ideological alignment, leading to a weakened opposition that cannot "resist the temptation" of state patronage. [flight from opposition law makers](#). This political volatility is exacerbated by severe insecurity in rural areas, such as the persistent "violent clashes" in Plateau State that have disrupted the farming season. [endured years of violent clashes](#).

Societal health is another pillar of instability. Reports of "hypertension quietly creeping" into the lives of children as young as eight suggest a population under extreme stress, likely driven by economic hardship and the "madness of social media." [as youngest eight](#). The government's response—infrastructure projects like the Delta bridges—aims to project progress, but the forensic audit in Osun State revealing billions lost to "ghost workers" indicates that the state apparatus is still hollowed out by internal fraud. [losing approximately 13.7 billion](#).

EXTERNAL DYNAMICS & GLOBAL POSTURE

Nigeria's global posture is currently reactive. The "deep disappointment" regarding the US Supreme Court's tariff ruling suggests Nigeria was banking on a more predictable trade environment. [rolling as deeply](#). In the tech sector, the push for "African AI solutions" indicates a desire to move from being a consumer of Western technology to a sovereign developer. [world needs african AI](#).

On the financial front, the IMF's pressure on China and the rising interest rates from international lenders are creating a "fiscal squeeze" on Nigeria. The government is attempting to signal stability to the "world bank" and other multilaterals by clearing state debts (with Jigawa and Kebbi states reportedly paying down 92% of their debt) to attract the "\$20 billion projects" needed for structural transformation. [pay that 92% their debts](#).

THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The economic climate is characterized by a desperate search for "prudent management" and a reduction in imports. While the Naira is

showing some resilience (exchanging "below 1400" to the dollar), the core issue remains the "quantum of the budget" vs. actual "disbursement." [entire 15.19 trillion](#).

- **Currency:** Naira is gaining value as speculators holding dollars "thinking twice" about liquidating. [nra gaining value](#).
- **Commodities:** WTI crude at \$66.71, Brent at \$78.62. Domestic pepper prices spiked to 65,000 per bag. [Texas intermediate crude rose](#).
- **Budget 2026:** 58.18 trillion naira proposed, with 5.41 trillion for defense and security. [proposal of 58.18 trillion](#).
- **Infrastructure:** 29.2 billion naira bridge project in Delta State is 78% complete. [29.2 billion naira bridge](#).
- **Trade Balance:** Petroleum imports down by 40% year-on-year, largely due to the Dangote refinery impact. [down by about 40%](#).

LEADERSHIP CHANGES

The day's events confirm a major shift in the political hierarchy, with "winners" being those aligned with the presidency's centralizing agenda and "losers" being those associated with independent state-level power bases or legacy "oil cabals."

- **Nasir El-Rufai:** The primary loser. His transition from governor to criminal suspect marks a significant fall from grace and signals a lack of immunity for former "untouchables." [ICPC take into custody](#).

- **Abdul Karim Lawan:** The longest-serving speaker in Nigerian history (14 years) is being hailed as a "benchmark for excellence," suggesting the administration values legislative continuity and consensus-building in key states like Borno. [longest serving in Nigerian history](#).
- **Mercy Johnson Okojie:** Appointed as Special Advisor on Public Engagement; a strategic move to utilize Nollywood's influence for "grassroots level" communication. [Mercy Johnson Ukoje has been appointed](#).
- **Mila Dantawaya:** FCT Commissioner of Police; currently tasked with overseeing the "12-hour restriction" and ensuring a "peaceful and orderly" FCT election. [Mila Dantawaya said the restriction](#).

EDITORIAL POSTURE & STORY HIERARCHY

The network maintains a posture of "nationalistic reassurance" while simultaneously highlighting severe criminal and fiscal breaches. The lead stories are dominated by FCT election readiness and the NMPC revenue order, framing the government as active and reform-minded. The "El-Rufai saga" is presented with a skeptical, analytic tone, allowing experts to debate its legality. Conspicuous omissions include a lack of detail on the "bandwidth issues" that might fail the electronic transmission of votes, which is brushed over as a "query" rather than a potential systemic failure. [querying the bandwidth](#). The focus on the "Amala" food culture and retired professors' cars serves as a "soft news" distraction from the grimmer realities of high-interest rates and rural insecurity.

GEOPOLITICAL FRAMING

The subtext of the day's geopolitical reporting positions Nigeria as a "country of particular concern" that is trying to prove its competence to the world bank and foreign investors by purging internal corruption.

- **United States:** Portrayed as an erratic partner whose domestic court rulings on tariffs create "unbearable imbalances" for global trade. [mowed unbearable imbalances](#).
- **China:** Framed as a competitor facing IMF scrutiny for "overcapacity" and "state support," implicitly justifying Nigeria's own shift toward market-driven oil pricing. [IMF is calling on China](#).
- **Algeria:** Used as a "weak" economic foil to emphasize Nigeria's superior market potential despite the latter's current struggles. [Algeria economy cannot actually compare](#).
- **India:** Framed as a model of "data control" that Nigeria should emulate to regain its guiney coefficient standing. [India is in control of its own data](#).

INFORMATION WARFARE ENVIRONMENT

- **Narrative Seeding:** The administration is aggressively pushing the "NMPC sabotage" narrative, blaming "ignorant people on social media" for not understanding that refinery flaring indicates functionality. [address the ignorant people](#).

- **Domestic Propaganda:** The heavy promotion of the "Renewed Hope" ambassadors and groups like "military wives for Tinubu" suggests an active effort to manufacture grassroots consent for the 2027 re-election bid. [mobilize support for the reelection](#).
- **Censorship/Psychological Ops:** The removal of mandatory electronic transmission in the 2026 Act is framed as a "safeguard" against bandwidth failure, potentially masking a move to retain "manual control" in collision centers. [no guarantee on the bandwidth](#).

HYPOTHESES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

- **The Fragmentation of the Elite:** The El-Rufai arrest will likely lead to a "war of disclosures" where rival factions leak intelligence reports to delegitimize one another, further destabilizing the ruling APC. [private to some the intelligence reports](#).
- **Fiscal Civil War:** The NMPC order will spark a legal battle between the federal government and state-run corporations, potentially stalling the rollout of the 2026 budget. [constrains the all of the economy](#).
- **Off-Season Disruption:** The FCT election results will likely be contested in court, providing the first test of the "binding nature" of primaries in the 2026 Electoral Act. [if candidate is elected... it should be binding](#).

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect a spike in "movement restrictions" across other states as by-elections approach. The FCT results will be

scrutinized for "vote-buying" patterns that the EFCC/ICPC have vowed to monitor. [EFCC and ICPC would be on found.](#)

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The implementation of the \$20 billion infrastructure projects will depend on the "success" of the NNPC revenue centralisation. If oil money doesn't hit the federation account, the 2026 budget will likely face severe underfunding. [budget not being funded.](#)

Long Term (1-5 Years): A shift toward "Sovereign AI" could fundamentally change Nigerian surveillance and security operations, but only if the "data problem" is solved by a more robust National Orientation Agency. [codify your knowledge.](#)

RISK ASSESSMENT

- **Systemic Electoral Failure:** The removal of mandatory real-time electronic transmission combined with documented "bandwidth issues" could lead to a massive delegitimization of the 2027 cycle. **Triggers:** Failed uploads in FCT. **Likelihood:** High. **Impact:** Catastrophic civil unrest. **Mitigations:** Engaging the NCC for positional reports. [anybody engaged NCC.](#)
- **Oil Sector Sabotage:** Entrenched interests within NNPC may react to the revenue order by reducing production or claiming "financial losses." **Triggers:** NNPC zero-remittance months. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Budget collapse. **Mitigations:** Immediate independent audit. [accounts of NMPC were not audited.](#)

- **Elite-Induced Insecurity:** High-profile arrests like El-Rufai's could trigger retaliatory violence from "bandit lists" supposedly linked to political actors. **Triggers:** Leaked "bandit lists." **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Widespread terror attacks. **Mitigations:** Transparency in intelligence reports. [list of people who are... supporting the bandits.](#)
- **Debt Sustainability Crisis:** Continued high interest rates and failure to increase primary health care revenue from 1% to 2% could lead to a sovereign default or total collapse of social services. **Triggers:** International market pricing. **Likelihood:** Moderate. **Impact:** Mass poverty. **Mitigations:** Shifting to domestic investment. [Neglect domestic investment.](#)
- **Social Media Radicalization of Youth:** The "internet blackmail" and grooming trends mentioned could lead to a surge in youth mental health crises and criminal behavior. **Triggers:** Viral "rape" hoaxes and grooming cases. **Likelihood:** High. **Impact:** Loss of the "next generation." **Mitigations:** School-based psychiatric screening. [receiver in this case who has opened up.](#)

GAPS & BLIND SPOTS

- **Technical Efficacy of BVAS:** The broadcast mentions "upgraded" BVAS but fails to explain how these machines overcome the specific "bandwidth" failures identified by the presidency. [3,345 upgraded by Modo.](#)
- **El-Rufai's Evidence:** While the "wiretapping" is the focus, the broadcast does not investigate the "video" where he allegedly "boasted" about it, leaving the public to rely on second-hand summaries. [used his own m to say, yes.](#)

- **Refinery Profitability Data:** The government claims refineries were "working but at what cost," yet no specific balance sheet for the "Potaco" (Port Harcourt) refinery was provided to verify these "huge losses." [refineries were working... at what cost.](#)
- **The "Bandit List" Contents:** The broadcast alludes to a government list of bandit supporters without naming any entities, creating a vacuum for disinformation. [this mask name is on that list.](#)

CONTRARIAN NARRATIVE SCENARIOS

- **The "Refinery Diversion":** The narrative that refineries are "working but unprofitable" might be a cover for a permanent pivot toward privatized refining (Dangote), allowing the state to dismantle the unionized public oil sector under the guise of fiscal prudence. [regime of uh financial losses.](#)
- **The "Controlled Opposition":** The "nomadic flight" of opposition lawmakers to the APC may be an orchestrated strategy by the ruling party to create a "one-state party" by 2027 while keeping a few "compliant" opposition figures to maintain a facade of democracy. [depleting the camp the opposition.](#)
- **Black Swan Event:** A successful hack of the "Sovereign AI" by foreign actors could lead to the mass manipulation of voter data or the direct theft of "wiretapped" intelligence, leading to a total institutional collapse. [knowledge and the value that you bring.](#)

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For Statecraft/Public Sector:

- Prioritize a joint positional report from the NCC and INEC to restore confidence in the 2026 Electoral Act before the 2027 cycle begins. [position report in 2026.](#)
- Formalize a transparent "Bailout Monitoring Committee" to ensure that the increased state allocations for infrastructure are not lost to the "ghost worker" syndrome. [reprove the bailout funds.](#)
- Accelerate the "Sovereign AI" initiative specifically for anti-corruption auditing of the NNPC accounts. [position Nigeria as a leader.](#)

For Private Sector/Investors:

- Focus capital allocation on "domestic manufacturing" (e.g., plastic manufacturing or agriculture in Jigawa) as the state shifts from foreign-dependent models. [50% of creod production now happens from domestic.](#)
- Prepare for increased regulatory scrutiny and "forensic audits" as the state-level investigation models (like Osun's) are likely to be replicated nationwide. [a 12 of a month of forensic audit.](#)
- Evaluate "secondary and tertiary health" investment opportunities as primary centers become "first responders," creating a higher-end market for specialized care. [transfer to tertiary and secondary.](#)

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The legislative environment is focused on "realigning authority" toward the executive.

The signing of the Electoral Act Amendment and the aggressive use of the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) demonstrate a preference for top-down regulatory shifts over prolonged parliamentary debate. [signed into law](#).

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **Electoral Act Amendment 2026:** Redefines the role of electronic transmission and attempts to restrict parties from imposing criteria beyond the constitution. [sealed weeks of heated debate](#).
- **2026 Appropriation Bill:** A 51.8 to 58.18 trillion naira budget aimed at defense, security, and increasing consolidated revenue for health. [51.8 trillion nara 2026](#).
- **Tax Reform Bill:** Aimed at ensuring "everybody's paying," though currently facing public "complaining." [tax bill of taxes](#).
- **Cyber Crimes Prohibition Act 2024:** Invoked as the primary legal mechanism against Governor El-Rufai for his alleged wiretapping. [Cyber crimes Prohibition Act 2024](#).

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **High-Level Stakeholders Forum (INEC):** Professor Joajton confirmed the deployment of "upgraded" BVAS and neutralized 16 parties' candidates. [high-level stakeholders forum](#).
- **Senate Committee on Appropriation:** Defense of the 2026 budget highlighting the fiscal pressure of "boring in global markets." [interactive session with the senate committee](#).

- **Innovate AI Conference Lagos:** Discussion on "responsible AI" and the need for ethical development in public services. [Innovate AI conference 2026](#).

KEY STORIES

- **FCT Area Council Elections Preparation:** Police announce 12-hour movement restriction (6 am to 6 pm) for February 21 polls. INEC confirms 1,587,252 PVCs collected (94.4% rate). Deployment of 3,345 upgraded BVAS machines to 2,822 polling units. [Independence National Electoral Commission expresses readiness](#).
- **NNPC Revenue Directive:** President Tinubu orders all oil proceeds into the Federation Account. Discussion on 30% retention for "management fees" and 20% for capital being "sabotage." [NMPC to remit to the federation](#).
- **Nasir El-Rufai Legal Saga:** Arrested for alleged wiretapping of NSA phone lines and 235 billion naira missing funds. DSS files three-count charge. ICPC and EFCC involved. [Arain former governor of Koduna state](#).
- **US Supreme Court Tariff Ruling:** Donald Trump's global tariffs struck down. US President describes ruling as "deeply disappointing." [US Supreme Court strikes down](#).
- **Ondo Monarch Murder:** Oba King Jacob of ahunga village killed in Akure North. Assailants reportedly used gun and sticks. Police investigation commenced. [investigation into the killing of traditional ruler](#).

- **Electoral Act 2026 Signing:** President signs amendment 24 hours after passage. Debate over Section 85 and electronic result transmission. [yesterday president side into law](#).
- **Osun State Payroll Fraud:** Forensic audit reveals 13.7 billion naira lost annually to ghost workers. 5,615 monthly salaries credited to one account. [12 of a month of forensic audit revealed](#).
- **Mercy Johnson Okojie Appointment:** Nollywood actress named Special Advisor on public engagement. Mixed reactions on social media regarding merit vs. popularity. [Mercy Johnson. Okojie performs in her new role](#).
- **Health Crisis - Youth Hypertension:** Reports that 1 in 7 adolescents globally has elevated BP. 5-13% of Nigerian students affected. Doctors link it to "murden lifestyle habits" and energy drinks. [hypertension quietly creeping](#).
- **Delta State Infrastructure:** DSC roundabout flyover opened to motorists. Part of three bridges initiated by Governor Sharif. 29.2 billion naira bridge at 78% completion. [DSC round about flyover now opened](#).
- **Mirabelle Rape Hoax:** 18-year-old girl recants rape allegations made to activist "Very Dark Man," citing mental health and intoxication. Police confirm no crime occurred. [revealed the alleged rape never happened](#).
- **Borno Speaker's Tenure:** Abdul Karim Lawan marks 14 years as Speaker. Hailed for passing 186 bills and maintaining "strategic diplomacy" across different governors. [Abdul Karim Lawan has presid over the house](#).
- **River State Impeachment Halt:** House of Assembly suspends impeachment against Governor Siminalayi Fubara. Intervention by the President cited as the reason. [suspended impeachmentts procedures](#).
- **Economic Indicators Defense:** 15.19 trillion naira budget deficit discussed. Oil revenue export down 30%. Petroleum imports down 40%. Reserves at \$49 billion. [clocking 52 of billion dollars](#).
- **Traditional Beetle Restoration:** Retired Professor Sam Otubushi recounts his wife's 1979 Volkswagen Beetle purchase for 300 naira, noting its lack of a radiator and durability. [Professor later drove the beetle](#).

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.

This report is entirely machine generated using Gemini 3 and may include errors and omissions. Please verify all findings. No data is used to train or tune any AI model.

For questions or suggestions, please contact kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com. To learn more or subscribe to our free daily newsletters, visit <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/announcing-our-new-daily-todays-trends-on-capitol-hill-todays-media-trends-newsletter-briefings/>. You can also learn more about the GDELT Project at <https://blog.gdeltproject.org/> and the Internet Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.