

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

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THE GDELT PROJECT



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NIGERIA GRAPPLES WITH A CRISIS OF INSTITUTIONAL TRUST AMID FISCAL STRAINS AND GLOBAL TRADE VOLATILITY

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

February 20, 2026, was defined by a rapid consolidation of executive power in Nigeria and a confrontational shift in United States global trade policy. In Nigeria, President Bola Tinubu signed the 2026 Electoral Act Amendment bill into law within 24 hours of its passage, a move seen by the administration as a stabilizing force but denounced by civil society and opposition leaders as a "missed opportunity" that preserves manual loopholes for result manipulation. This legislative rush coincided with a draconian 22-hour pre-election curfew in the Federal Capital Territory (FCT) ahead of area council polls, sparking an intense public spat between the FCT Minister and the territory's sole senator over the line between proactive security and authoritarian overreach. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

Simultaneously, the Nigerian government faces a deepening fiscal paradox. While the Nigeria Exchange (NGX) hit historic record highs driven by revised pension fund limits,

the Senate Committee on Appropriations grilled the President's economic team over the near-total failure to fund the 2025 capital budget despite massive borrowing. The administration is attempting to solve this through a controversial Executive Order mandating that all oil and gas revenues flow directly to the federation account, bypassing the NNPC's statutory retention fees. This move has already triggered a backlash from energy unions (PENGASSAN), who warn of labor unrest and a threat to 4,000 jobs, suggesting that the administration's efforts to curb "wasteful deductions" may inadvertently destabilize the nation's primary revenue generator. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

Globally, the landscape was jarred by U.S. President Donald Trump's decision to impose a 10% global tariff immediately after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down his previous tariff regime. This defiance of judicial oversight, combined with a 10-day ultimatum issued to Iran regarding its nuclear program, has placed international markets and security frameworks on high alert. Within Nigeria, these pressures are compounded by a resurgence of Lassa Fever, a deadly mining tragedy in Plateau State caused by regulatory non-compliance, and brazen insurgent attacks in Kebbi, collectively highlighting a persistent gap in state capacity to manage domestic crises. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **Swift Enactment of the 2026 Electoral Act Amendment:** President Tinubu signed the amended act despite significant opposition to a "failure clause" that allows manual result collation (Form EC8A) if electronic transmission fails. Proponents argue this accounts for infrastructure realities, while critics claim it legalizes electoral fraud at collation centers. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))
- **Fiscal Crisis vs. Market Boom:** The Senate confronted the economic team over the "non-funding" of the 2025 budget, noting that 70% of budgeted funds were never released. Meanwhile, the NGX all-share index surged nearly 6% in a single week to 193,000+ points, creating a stark divergence between institutional investment and state fiscal health. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))
- **NNPC Revenue Re-centralization:** A new Executive Order directs all oil and gas revenues to the federation account, removing the NNPC's ability to retain a 30% management fee or frontier exploration funds. Labor unions argue this overrides the Petroleum Industry Act (PIA) and threatens the commercial viability of the state oil firm. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))
- **Plateau Mining Tragedy:** Between 33 and 38 miners died at the Zurak mining site due to toxic gas exposure (carbon monoxide and sulfite). The site was allegedly "ceded" to the local community without safety infrastructure or gas monitoring, leading to a federal probe and sealing of the area. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

- **Trump's Global Tariff and Iran Ultimatum:** The U.S. President imposed a 10% global tariff, circumventing a Supreme Court ruling. Simultaneously, he set a 10-15 day deadline for a nuclear deal with Iran, threatening military action if negotiations fail, which has immediately spiked global oil prices. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))
- **Arrest of Andrew Mountbatten-Windsor:** The King's brother was arrested on suspicion of misconduct in public office related to the leaking of confidential UK trade documents to Jeffrey Epstein in 2010-2011. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

- **Geopolitics:** Tension between the U.S. and Iran reached a critical threshold with a 10-day military ultimatum. In Africa, Russia continues to expand its influence, with President Putin hosting Madagascar's interim leader to discuss mineral and energy cooperation. ([Source](#), [Source](#))
- **Economic Statecraft:** Nigeria is attempting to pivot from debt-driven spending to an investment-led economy, citing a \$20 billion commitment from Shell as a sign of confidence. However, the reliance on Executive Orders to manage fiscal leakages suggests a struggle between the executive and established legislative frameworks like the PIA. ([Source](#), [Source](#))
- **Civil Unrest and Social Order:** The imposition of a 22-hour curfew in the FCT ahead of local polls is being characterized by the opposition as "authoritarian" and "draconian." Meanwhile, transport workers in Lagos are protesting bans on minibuses (Koropkwe), and local government employees in Ogun have issued a 7-day strike ultimatum over autonomy. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

- **Corruption and Governance:** The ICPC raided the Abuja residence of former Kaduna Governor Nasir El-Rufai as part of a multi-agency probe (SSS, EFCC, ICPC) into mismanagement and alleged wire-tapping of the National Security Advisor. ([Source](#), [Source](#))
- **Infrastructure and State Capacity:** Poor road conditions in the Northeast (Damaturu-Maguza) and delayed infrastructure projects in Anambra have forced the government to issue warnings to contractors. The Plateau mining incident reveals a critical lack of enforcement in the solid minerals sector. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))
- **Terrorism:** Lakurawa militants killed over 30 people in Kebbi State, while a military base in Borno was raided, resulting in eight soldier deaths. This indicates a resurgence of insurgent boldness in the north. ([Source](#), [Source](#))
- **Legislation:**
 - **Electoral Act Amendment 2026:** Mandates electronic transmission but retains Form EC8A as a legal fallback during "communication failure." ([Source](#), [Source](#))
 - **Executive Order on Oil Revenue:** Diverts NNPC frontier funds and management fees to the Federation Account. ([Source](#), [Source](#))
 - **Lagos State Drug Enforcement Policy:** Zero-tolerance for drug use by commercial drivers, involving mandatory eye screenings and drug tests. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

LEGISLATION/POLICY

The governance focus has shifted toward using Executive Orders to bypass legislative bottlenecks and address immediate fiscal and

electoral concerns. Major hearings were held in the National Assembly regarding the 2026 budget and the failure of the 2025 fiscal cycle.

- **Electoral Act Amendment Bill 2026:** Signed into law by President Tinubu. It elevates the Result Viewing Portal (IReV) to a statutory requirement but includes a proviso that manual results are valid if a "glitch" or network failure occurs. Opposition members argue this makes electronic transmission optional in practice. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))
- **Revenue Management Executive Order:** Directs the NNPC to remit all production sharing, royalties, and flaring penalties directly to the federation account. It cancels the 30% retention for frontier exploration and 0.5% for gas infrastructure. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))
- **FCT Pre-Election Movement Restriction Policy:** Imposed a 22-hour restriction (8 pm Friday to 6 pm Saturday) for FCT area council elections. The policy is justified by security reports but criticized for paralyzing economic activity in the capital. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **2026 Budget Defense (Senate Appropriations Committee):** The Finance Minister and NNPC officials were grilled on why 2025 capital projects were not funded. The session was eventually moved to a "closed door" meeting when officials claimed certain answers were too sensitive for the public. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

- **Ministry of Livestock Development Budget Session:** Lawmakers criticized the government for providing "lip service" to the livestock sector, noting Nigeria still imports 65% of its consumed animal protein despite having a dedicated ministry. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The Fragmentation of the Elite Alliance:

The escalating legal and security-based attacks on former Governor El-Rufai by the Tinubu administration suggest a breakdown in the "Northern Alliance" that brought the APC to power. Analysts note that these probes, which include allegations of wire-tapping the National Security Advisor, are part of a broader strategy to neutralize potential 2027 or 2031 rivals. The fact that El-Rufai's son and close aides are also being targeted signifies a shift toward total political containment. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

Fiscal Decoupling - Market Greed vs. State Need:

A dangerous trend is emerging where Nigeria's capital markets are thriving (record index highs) while the state itself is fiscally insolvent. Institutional investors, primarily pension funds, are flooding the NGX due to revised limits, while the government is unable to release funds for basic infrastructure. This "bubble" is fueled by liquidity rather than economic productivity, creating a significant risk of a market correction if the government cannot stabilize its own revenue collection. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

The Normalization of "Exceptional" Measures:

The use of Executive Orders to override Acts of Parliament (NNPC/PIA) and the imposition of 24-hour curfews for local elections signal a trend toward "governance by

decree." The administration justifies these moves as necessary to block corruption or ensure security, but the lack of consultation with stakeholders (unions, opposition, territory representatives) is creating a reservoir of institutional resentment. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

Global Trade Anarchy: Trump's decision to impose tariffs in direct defiance of the Supreme Court suggests a period of extreme unpredictability in global trade. For Nigeria, this could mean higher costs for imported technology and machinery, while the threat of military action in Iran keeps oil prices volatile—a double-edged sword for a nation that exports crude but imports finished fuel and goods. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

Short Term (1-4 Weeks): Expect heightened tension in the oil sector as PENGASSAN may commence industrial action over the revenue Executive Order. In the FCT, the results of the area council elections will serve as a litmus test for the popularity of the Wike-led administration and the potential for voter apathy due to the draconian curfew. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

Medium Term (1-6 Months): The 2026 budget will likely undergo significant reductions as the National Assembly realizes revenue targets are unrealistic. The "glitch" narrative for 2027 will begin to solidify as INEC begins its procurement for the next general cycle under the newly signed, manual-proviso-inclusive law. ([Source](#), [Source](#), [Source](#))

Long Term (1-5 Years): Nigeria risks a structural shift toward a more centralized, executive-heavy governance model if the precedent of overriding the PIA and Electoral Act consensus continues. The "privatization of survival"—where citizens build their own in-

frastructure while the state fails to fund its budget—will likely lead to increased social justice movements and a potential push for radical alternatives in 2027. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- The shift toward "Executive Order" governance in Nigeria's oil sector creates a shaky legal foundation for long-term production sharing contracts; diplomatic missions should seek clarification on how these orders interact with the PIA to protect foreign investment. ([Source](#))
- Global security monitors should note the 10-day U.S. ultimatum to Iran; any military escalation will immediately disrupt West African maritime security and shipping insurance rates. ([Source](#))
- The arrest of Prince Andrew and the release of Epstein-related files suggest a prolonged period of reputational risk for institutions linked to the former prince's trade envoy work. ([Source](#))

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Regulatory Risk:** Investors in the Nigerian energy sector must brace for labor strikes and potential restructuring of NNPC's commercial entities. The direct remittance order may starve NNPC of necessary capital for joint-venture obligations. ([Source](#))
- **Market Risk:** While the NGX is currently at record highs, the "non-funding" of the 2025 state budget implies that the underlying infrastructure supporting these businesses is deteriorating, suggesting that current valuations may be detached from long-term reality. ([Source](#), [Source](#))

- **Supply Chain/Compliance:** The mining sector in Nigeria remains a "high-risk" zone. Companies must implement their own independent gas and safety monitoring systems, as state oversight is proven to be insufficient to prevent mass-casualty events. ([Source](#))

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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For questions or suggestions, please contact kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com. You can also learn

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