

TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

TTV

FEBRUARY 23, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT

TAIWAN'S RESILIENCE:

Record Highs Amidst Global Volatility & Domestic Realignment



February 23, 2026: A Day of Extreme Contrast.
Markets Surge, Politics Thaw, while Global Trade & Security Risks Escalate.

GLOBAL SHOCKS & EXTERNAL PRESSURES

U.S. SUPREME COURT RULING
(Tariffs Illegal)



15% GLOBAL TARIFF
(150 Days)



LEGAL WARFARE & MARKET UNCERTAINTY

U.S. POLICY CHAOS:
Tariffs escalate despite legal battles. Importers face massive costs & uncertainty.

IRAN



USS LINCOLN

USS FORD

CARTEL LEADER "EL MENCHO" NEUTRALIZED



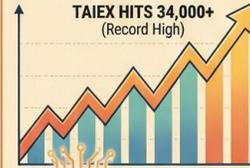
UNREST & ARSON



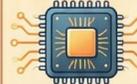
REGIONAL CONFLICT:
U.S. carrier groups mass in Gulf. Mexican cartel strike triggers unrest. Global energy & shipping threatened.

TAIWAN'S RESPONSE: MARKET & POLITICAL THAW

TAIEX HITS 34,000+
(Record High)



TSMC RECORD
(1,935 TWD) & AI DEMAND



SUPPLY CHAIN DIVERSIFICATION
(Vietnam, Thailand)



ECONOMIC DECOUPLING:
Tech sector shows "numbness" to trade shocks, leveraged by AI boom & de-risking from China. Corporations bake in volatility.

FIVE-YUAN TEA GATHERING
(Executive, Legislative, Judicial, Examination, Control)



THAW



DEFENSE BUDGET NEGOTIATION
(1.25 Trillion TWD - Potential Compromise)

CONSTITUTIONAL DIALOGUE:
President Lai hosts meeting to break legislative deadlock. Opposition KMT shows signs of softening on defense spending.

IMPLICATIONS, STRAINS & FORESIGHT

HEALTHCARE STRAIN
(Flu/Norovirus Surge)



PUBLIC SAFETY CONCERNS
("Random" Scares & Domestic Violence)



SOCIETAL STRESS:
Hospitals near capacity ahead of holiday. Public alarms highlight strain on social fabric & infrastructure.

SHORT TERM:
Node 1-4 Weeks
Healthcare Crunch & Tariff Legal Battles (Market Whip-sawing)

MEDIUM TERM:
Node 1-6 Months
Defense Budget Deal Likely & Energy Price Risk (Potential Iran Conflict)

LONG TERM:
Node 1-5 Years
US-Japan-Taiwan "Digital Shield" & Leg. Yuan Relocation (Urban Redevelopment)

STRATEGIC OUTLOOK:
Expect near-term friction. Mid-term compromise is probable. Long-term trend towards tech insulation & internal modernization.

OVERALL THEME:

Taiwan demonstrates remarkable economic resilience through tech dominance, while navigating complex domestic political realignment and a deteriorating global security architecture. Strategic patience and diversification are key to future stability.



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TAIWAN MARKETS HIT RECORD
HIGHS AMIDST GLOBAL TRADE
VOLATILITY AND DOMESTIC
POLITICAL REALIGNMENT

DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

February 23, 2026, marked a day of extreme contrast for Taiwan, as the domestic equity market surged to historic levels while the international trade environment descended into fresh chaos following a series of aggressive tariff maneuvers by U.S. President Donald Trump. Despite the U.S. Supreme Court ruling previous tariffs illegal, the Trump administration immediately countered by [imposing a 10% global tariff](#), later escalated to 15% for a 150-day period. This "legal warfare" between the U.S. executive and judicial branches has created a period of profound global market uncertainty, yet Taiwan's technology sector appears increasingly "numb" to these shocks, leveraging diversified supply chains in Southeast Asia to maintain [record-breaking momentum on the TAIEX](#), which briefly touched the 34,000-point milestone.

Domestically, the "Five-Yuan Tea Gathering" hosted by President Lai Ching-te signaled a

potential thaw in the prolonged legislative deadlock. The meeting between the heads of the Executive, Legislative, Judicial, Examination, and Control Yuans—including a high-profile exchange with Legislative Speaker Han Kuo-yu—focused on [resolving the impasse over the 1.25 trillion TWD defense budget](#) and general government expenditures. Early indications suggest the opposition KMT may be softening its stance on defense spending, potentially proposing a compromise version of the military procurement budget to ensure national security continuity amidst escalating regional tensions in the Middle East and the South China Sea.

Beyond the halls of power, Taiwan is grappling with a series of public safety concerns, including a spate of "random" knife-related scares in Taipei and Keelung, and a tragic murder-suicide attempt in Tainan. These incidents, coupled with [overcrowded emergency rooms](#) facing a surge in flu and norovirus cases ahead of the February 28 holiday, suggest a strain on the island's social fabric and healthcare infrastructure. Internationally, the death of Mexican cartel leader "El Mencho" in a U.S.-backed operation and the [massing of U.S. carrier strike groups](#) in the Persian Gulf highlight a deteriorating global security architecture that threatens to disrupt energy prices and shipping lanes in the medium term.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

- **TAIEX Record Performance:** The Taiwan Stock Exchange opened the "Year of the Horse" with unprecedented gains, [surpassing the 34,000-point mark](#) during intraday trading. TSMC led the charge, reaching a [record high of 1,935 TWD](#), driven by relentless demand for AI infrastructure and a new tripartite semiconductor alliance between Taiwan, the U.S., and Japan.
- **U.S. Tariff Escalation:** Following a Supreme Court ruling that certain tariffs were unconstitutional, the Trump administration [announced a new 15% global tariff](#) effective for 150 days. This has triggered a massive legal battle as importers seek to recover up to [175 billion USD in past duties](#), while simultaneously bracing for new costs.
- **Defense Budget Thaw:** The KMT and TPP opposition parties showed signs of [flexibility regarding the 1.25 trillion TWD defense special budget](#). The KMT is reportedly preparing a version ranging from 350 billion to 750 billion TWD over eight years to [accelerate the procurement of advanced missile systems](#) like NASAMS.
- **Five-Yuan Constitutional Dialogue:** President Lai Ching-te utilized a "Tea Gathering" to [bridge the divide with Legislative Speaker Han Kuo-yu](#). Han emphasized a policy of "turning big things into small things" to ensure state stability, while Lai reaffirmed his [willingness to deliver a State of the Nation report](#) to the legislature under constitutional protocols.

- **Regional Conflict Escalation:** The U.S. has moved the USS Gerald R. Ford to the Persian Gulf to join the USS Abraham Lincoln, signaling a potential [two-stage military operation against Iran](#). This coincides with a major strike against the CJNG cartel in Mexico, where leader ["El Mencho" was reportedly killed](#), sparking widespread arson and civil unrest across six Mexican states.

KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

Economic Security & Trade Resilience

- Taiwanese industry leaders, including Acer's Jason Chen, indicate that supply chains have already [shifted significantly to Vietnam and Thailand](#) to mitigate U.S. tariff risks, suggesting a "de-risking" from both China and direct U.S. trade volatility.
- The Central Bank and Ministry of Finance are [monitoring the New Taiwan Dollar](#), which saw a slight appreciation to 31.462 against the USD on the first day of trading, despite the global tariff shocks.

Technology Policy & Digital Sovereignty

- A strategic partnership between [Powerchip \(PSMC\), Intel, and SoftBank](#) aims to develop next-generation HBM (High Bandwidth Memory) and AI supercomputer chips, reinforcing Taiwan's [pivotal role in the global AI hardware ecosystem](#).
- Lego has entered the AI market with "Smart Bricks" [featuring integrated sensors and chips](#), highlighting the pervasive expansion of AI into consumer goods and the resulting pressure on semiconductor supply chains.

National Security & Security Architecture

- The military is prioritizing the acquisition of [nine additional sets of advanced surface-to-air missiles](#) to complete the "Shield of Taiwan" by 2031.
- Legislative Speaker Han Kuo-yu is [quietly advocating for the relocation of the Legislative Yuan](#), considering sites like the Grand Hotel in Taipei or military camps in Taichung to modernize government infrastructure.

Domestic Stability & Public Safety

- A "random" knife-scare at [Taipei Main Station's M8 exit](#)—the site of a previous attack—caused significant public alarm, though no injuries were reported. The suspect, a man with a history of fraud, [was arrested under charges of threatening public safety](#).
- The Tainan "Family Murder" case, involving a [60-year-old man attacking his wife and brother-in-law](#) with iron bars and knives, underscores a rise in domestic violence and mental health crises following the holiday season.

LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

The legislative agenda is currently dominated by the high-stakes negotiations surrounding the national defense budget and the fiscal relationship between the central and local governments. The "Five-Yuan Tea Gathering" served as an informal venue for executive-legislative coordination on these critical files before the formal session resumes.

BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **1.25 Trillion Defense Special Budget:** A massive procurement bill [currently stalled in the Procedure Committee](#). Negotiations are shifting toward a tiered version (350B-750B TWD) to secure opposition support.
- **Fiscal Revenue and Expenditure Classification Act:** A contentious bill regarding [how tax revenue is shared with local municipalities](#), which remains a core demand of the KMT-led local governments.
- **Legislative Yuan Relocation Proposal:** Speaker Han Kuo-yu is [pitching two primary relocation plans](#) to the Five-Yuan heads to address aging infrastructure and space constraints.

HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **Five-Yuan New Year Gathering:** President Lai [hosted the heads of the five branches](#) to discuss the "State of the Nation" report and budget passage.
- **Ministry of Transportation New Year Greeting:** Minister Chen Shih-kai announced that [daily travel hit 730,000 people](#) during the Spring Festival, a 109% increase from the previous year.
- **GOP Press Conference (US):** Treasury Secretary Bessent [defended the new global tariffs](#), attributing the move to Democratic "left-wing extremism" and the need for economic dominance.

DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

The "Numbness" of Global Markets to Trade Volatility The most striking trend is the [decoupling of Taiwan's equity performance](#) from the chaos of U.S. trade

policy. Traditionally, a 15% global tariff would trigger a market sell-off; however, the TAIEX [hit record highs](#) simultaneously. This suggests that the "AI Boom" and the structural shift of manufacturing out of China have created a layer of resilience. Corporations have [baked trade volatility into their operating models](#), viewing tariffs as a manageable cost of doing business rather than a systemic threat.

Constitutional Realpolitik in the Lai Administration The "Tea Gathering" strategy indicates that President Lai is shifting away from direct confrontation with the opposition-led legislature. By [leveraging the Five-Yuan heads](#) as mediators and [agreeing to the State of the Nation report](#), the administration is attempting to "grease the wheels" for the 1.25 trillion TWD defense budget. This "soft power" approach in domestic politics mirrors the strategic patience required in international relations.

Public Health Infrastructure Under Seasonal and Systemic Strain The activation of ["cross-departmental bed-sharing"](#) in major hospitals like NTU highlights a looming healthcare crisis. The convergence of a "long winter" flu season and the [imminent February 28 holiday travel rush](#) suggests that the healthcare system is operating at near-total capacity. This systemic strain is likely to become a focal point for legislative criticism in the coming weeks.

STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

- **Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Expect significant [congestion in the healthcare system](#) as norovirus and flu cases peak following the post-holiday return to work. On the trade front, the U.S. will likely face a barrage of [legal challenges in the Court of International Trade](#) regarding the 15% tariff, which may lead to temporary injunctions and further market whip-sawing.
- **Medium Term (1-6 Months):** A compromise on the [defense special budget](#) is likely to be reached by March, allowing Taiwan to finalize its 2031 air defense roadmap. If U.S.-Iran tensions escalate into the rumored "two-stage attack," [global energy prices will surge](#), potentially dampening the current TAIEX rally and forcing a re-evaluation of Taiwan's energy subsidies.
- **Long Term (1-5 Years):** The Taiwan-U.S.-Japan AI chip pact [will likely formalize into a "Digital Shield,"](#) creating a closed-loop ecosystem for high-end semiconductors that is insulated from Chinese influence. Domestically, the [relocation of the Legislative Yuan](#) could trigger a major urban redevelopment phase in either Taipei or Taichung, shifting the center of gravity for Taiwan's political elite.

RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

For International Policy:

- **Security Alignment:** Partners should prepare for a [widening strategic gap between the U.S. and South Korea](#), as Seoul resists trilateral aerial exercises, potentially leaving Taiwan more reliant on the U.S.-Japan-Australia axis.
- **Trade Diplomacy:** European and Asian nations must [clarify the status of existing industrial trade agreements](#) as the EU considers retaliatory measures against the new U.S. global tariffs.
- **Energy Diversification:** Nations dependent on Persian Gulf oil should [accelerate strategic reserve fills](#) given the increased probability of a kinetic conflict involving U.S. carrier groups in Iranian waters.

For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Semiconductor Holdings:** Investors should maintain core positions in [AI infrastructure and advanced packaging](#) leaders like TSMC, but implement strict "trailing stops" as the TAIEX approaches psychological resistance at 34,200.
- **Supply Chain Relocation:** Companies still reliant on direct U.S.-China trade routes should [accelerate "China+1" shifts to Vietnam or Thailand](#), as the new 15% U.S. tariff regime appears designed for long-term protectionism.
- **Cybersecurity Risk:** The [hacker intrusion at a major North Taiwan hotel](#) serves as a warning that travel and hospitality sectors remain high-priority targets for data theft during peak holiday periods.

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. You can also learn more about the GDEL Project at <https://blog.gdelproject.org/> and the Internet

Archive's TV News Archive at <https://archive.org/details/tv>.