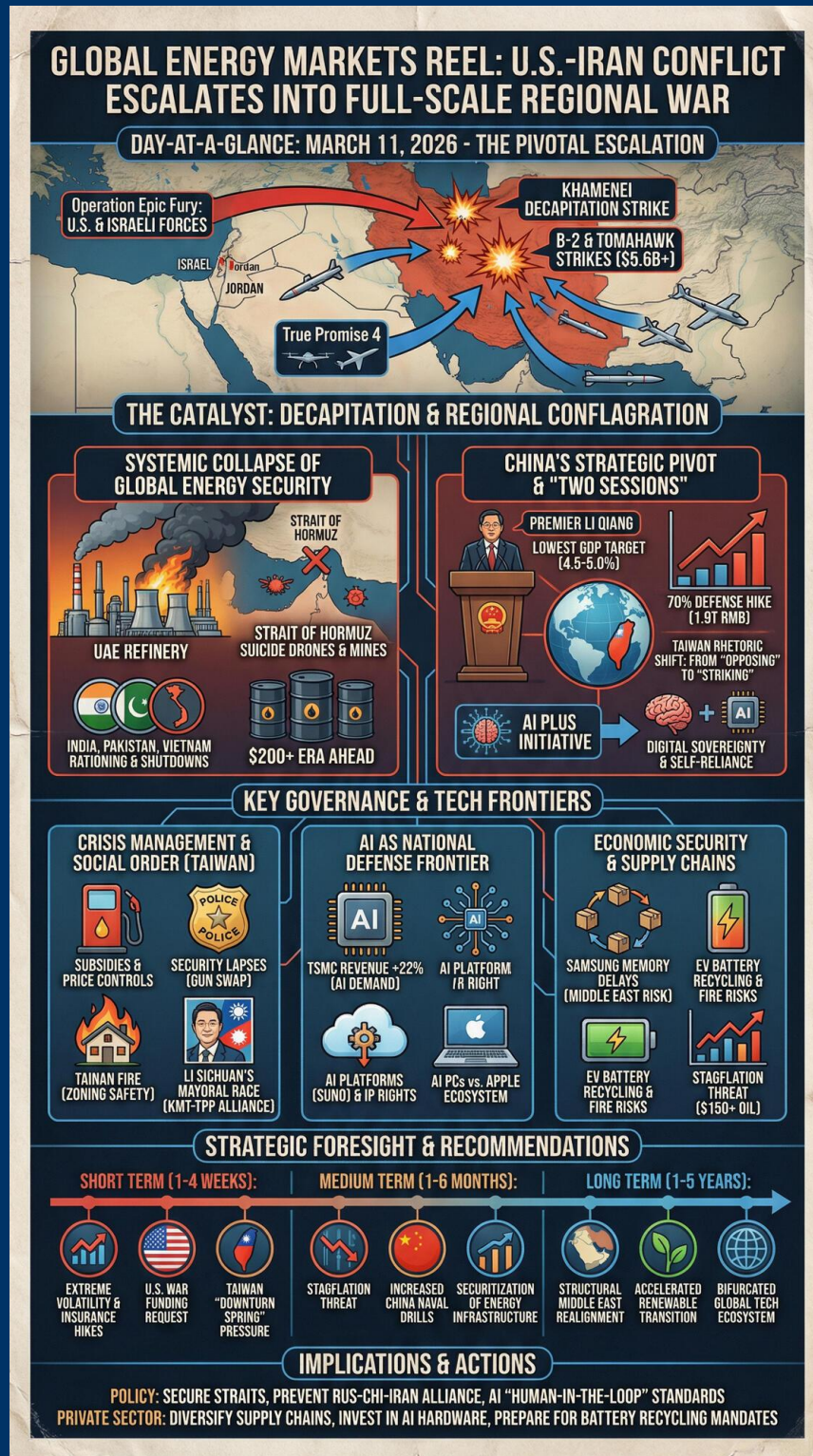


# TODAY'S MEDIA TRENDS

TTV

MARCH 11, 2026

THE GDELT PROJECT



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GLOBAL ENERGY MARKETS REEL  
AS U.S.-IRAN CONFLICT ESCALATES  
INTO FULL-SCALE REGIONAL WAR

## DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

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March 11, 2026, marks a pivotal escalation in global instability as the "Operation Epic Fury" launched by the U.S. and Israel against Iran has transitioned from targeted strikes to a broader regional conflagration. The reported elimination of Iran's Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and his immediate family in an [airstrike by Israeli F-35s](#) has triggered "True Promise 4," a multi-front Iranian retaliation involving drone and missile swarms targeting Israel, Jordan, and global energy infrastructure. The strategic objective has shifted from nuclear containment to an overt push for regime change, with the U.S. deploying tens of thousands of troops and carrier groups to the Indian Ocean to [counter Iranian naval assets](#) and prevent a total blockade of the Strait of Hormuz.

The economic fallout is immediate and severe. Global oil prices are volatile, with analysts warning of a "\$200 per barrel era" as Iran successfully disrupts shipping and strikes [major refineries in the UAE](#) and Saudi Arabia.

This energy shock has forced developing nations like India, Pakistan, and Vietnam into emergency rationing, school closures, and industrial shutdowns. Concurrently, China is utilizing its "Two Sessions" to signal a hardened stance on Taiwan—shifting its rhetoric from "opposing" to ["striking" independence forces](#)—while internalizing its economy through "AI Plus" initiatives to insulate itself from the expanding conflict's supply chain disruptions.

In Taiwan, domestic governance is strained by the intersection of these global shocks and local political maneuvering. The entry of Li Sichuan into the New Taipei City mayoral race signals a consolidation of the KMT-TPP alliance, even as the [administration struggles with security lapses](#), including a high-profile case of a police officer swapping service weapons for models. The convergence of a "Downturn Spring" (倒春寒) weather pattern, soaring energy costs, and the psychological impact of the World Baseball Classic elimination has created a volatile social atmosphere, demanding heightened state capacity to maintain order.

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

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### • **The Decapitation of Iranian Leadership and "Operation Epic Fury":**

- The U.S.-Israeli coalition has reportedly targeted the highest levels of the Iranian government, with reports indicating the [death of Supreme Leader Khamenei](#) and his top commanders during a meeting in Tehran.
- U.S. forces have expended an estimated [\\$5.6 billion in munitions](#) within the opening phases of the campaign, primarily using B-2 bombers and Tomahawk Block V missiles to destroy underground ballistic missile facilities.
- The Pentagon confirmed over [140 U.S. service members](#) have been injured in retaliatory strikes, with eight in critical condition.

### • **Systemic Collapse of Global Energy Security:**

- The Strait of Hormuz is under partial blockade, with Iran utilizing "suicide drones" and mine-laying vessels to [attack commercial shipping](#), despite U.S. claims of securing the channel.
- The UAE's largest refinery has been [forced to cease operations](#) following a massive drone strike, leading to a daily production loss of 920,000 barrels.
- India has implemented [drastic restrictions on commercial gas](#) use, leading to the closure of restaurants, hotels, and even crematoriums in Maharashtra and Bangalore.

### • **China's Strategic Pivot at the "Two Sessions":**

- Premier Li Qiang announced a 2026 GDP target of 4.5-5.0%, the [lowest in 35 years](#), reflecting a "new reality" of economic cooling and international isolation.
- China's defense budget is set to [increase by 70%](#) (reaching 1.9 trillion RMB), focused on "Combat Readiness" and intelligence-led warfare.
- Rhetorical shift on Taiwan: The government has officially adopted the term ["striking" \(打击\) Taiwan independence](#), replacing the traditional "opposing" (反对).

### • **Taiwan Domestic Security and Political Realignment:**

- KMT heavyweight Li Sichuan has [officially entered the New Taipei City](#) mayoral race, supported by a "Golden Campaign Team" including former aides to Eric Chu and Hou You-yi.
- A significant security breach occurred within the Second Special Police Corps, where an officer [swapped a service handgun](#) and live ammunition for a model gun prior to resigning.
- A fatal [fire in Tainan City](#) destroyed seven tin-structure houses, killing a couple who owned a motorcycle shop, highlighting ongoing concerns regarding industrial zoning safety.

## KEY GOVERNANCE TOPICS

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### **Energy Security and Crisis Management**

The global energy market is facing its most significant disruption since 2022. Governments are deploying emergency

subsidies and price controls to prevent social unrest.

- Taiwan's Executive Yuan has launched a [special fuel subsidy mechanism](#), with the state-owned CPC absorbing 60% of price increases to stabilize the cost of living.
- Airlines including Qantas, Air New Zealand, and Hong Kong Airlines have [hiked fuel surcharges](#) by up to 35.2%, with warnings that budget carriers may face bankruptcy if prices exceed \$200/barrel.
- Pakistan and Bangladesh have [suspended university and school](#) sessions for two weeks to reduce national energy consumption.

**AI, Technology Policy & Digital Sovereignty** The "Two Sessions" and the upcoming Nvidia GTC 2026 conference highlight the transition of AI from a commercial tool to a critical component of national power.

- China is prioritizing the ["AI Plus" initiative](#) to drive commercialization across all major industrial sectors and military applications.
- The AI music platform Suno is [facing legal settlements](#) with major labels like Warner Music, setting a precedent for intellectual property rights in generative AI.
- ASUS and other Taiwan PC makers are [betting on AI PCs](#) to revitalize the consumer market, despite competition from Apple's closed ecosystem.

**Domestic Stability & Social Order** Taiwan is grappling with a series of high-profile

crimes and infrastructure accidents that test public confidence in the rule of law.

- Police in Taipei arrested a "robbery team" that [stole 2 million TWD](#) from a woman during a virtual currency transaction at Yang Ming Hospital.
- Reports of "renovation scammers" (装修蟑螂) are rising, with victims losing [hundreds of thousands of dollars](#) to contractors who disappear after demolition.
- A social media-based recruitment drive for the "Sun Union" (天道盟太阳联盟) triad [offering tailored suits](#) and badges to new members has prompted a police investigation into gang expansion.

**Economic Security & Supply Chains** The intersection of war and technology is reshaping global investment flows.

- TSMC reported [February revenue of 317.6 billion TWD](#), a 22% year-on-year increase, driven by insatiable demand for AI chips.
- Samsung's supply chain is threatened by the [Middle East war](#), as critical materials for DRAM and Flash memory face transport delays, potentially triggering a "super cycle" of price hikes.
- The recycling of EV and electric bus batteries is becoming a [regulatory priority in Taiwan](#), as the fleet reaches 42.6% electrification and fire risks increase.

## LEGISLATIVE ROUNDUP

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The primary legislative focus centers on China's 2026 Government Work Report and Taiwan's emergency economic measures to counter inflation. Governance is currently operating in "crisis mode" across multiple jurisdictions.

## BILLS DISCUSSED/DEBATED:

- **2026 China National Defense Budget:** A proposed [70% increase in military spending](#) to 1.9 trillion RMB, prioritizing "AI-led" warfare and regional dominance.
- **Taiwan Emergency Fuel Price Stabilization Act:** A policy directive from the Executive Yuan to [absorb fuel price surges](#) through state-owned enterprise revenue to prevent double-digit inflation.
- **Cybersecurity Mandatory Officer Regulation:** New Taiwan financial regulations requiring [insurance companies to appoint](#) Chief Information Security Officers (CISOs) as cyber threats from regional actors rise.

## HEARINGS & PRESS EVENTS:

- **China's "Two Sessions" Press Conference:** Foreign Minister Wang Yi [questioned Japan's right](#) to exercise self-defense over Taiwan and warned against any external interference in China's "reunification" timeline.
- **Li Sichuan Mayoral Announcement:** Li Sichuan addressed [controversies involving his brother](#) and signaled a desire for "Blue-White" unity to secure the New Taipei City mayoralty.
- **Ministry of Agriculture Tokyo Visit:** Minister Chen Jun-ji visited [Tokyo's Ota Market](#) to promote Taiwan's flower exports as a means of diversifying agricultural trade away from the Chinese market.

## DEEP DIVE: TRENDS AND THEMES

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**The Weaponization of Energy and Logistics** The current conflict has moved beyond traditional military engagement into a

systematic assault on global logistics. The targeting of UAE refineries and the Iranian threat to the [Hormuz Strait](#) are not merely tactical moves but strategic attempts to force the West into an economic retreat. The fact that the U.S. is reportedly "burning through" [billions in munitions](#) suggests a high-intensity conflict that the current industrial base may struggle to sustain, especially as oil prices drain the treasury. The trend is toward a "war of attrition" where energy-poor nations (Taiwan, Japan, South Korea) are the most vulnerable collateral.

**The End of "Strategic Ambiguity" in the Taiwan Strait** China's linguistic shift from "opposing" to "striking" independence forces, combined with its massive military budget hike, suggests a preparation for conflict that coincides with the U.S. being bogged down in the Middle East. Premier Li Qiang's [abandonment of the "Protect 5%" GDP growth target](#) indicates that the CCP is now prioritizing "National Security" and "Self-Reliance" over market-driven growth. This "Securitization of Everything" is the dominant theme of the 2026 Two Sessions, signaling that the "習川會" (Xi-Trump Summit) later this month may be a final diplomatic attempt before a more permanent rupture.

**AI as the New National Defense Frontier** The emergence of Suno and other AI platforms is being treated not just as a cultural shift, but as a sovereignty issue. China's "AI Plus" and Taiwan's "AI PC" focus represent a race to control the "computational high ground." The [high demand for ABF substrates](#) and high-speed transmission materials indicates that the hardware backbone of AI is the new "oil." However, as seen in the [electric bus battery fires](#), the rapid adoption of these technologies is outpacing the regulatory and safety frameworks designed to manage them.

## STRATEGIC FORESIGHT

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**Short Term (1-4 Weeks):** Expect extreme volatility in the energy sector as insurance premiums for shipping in the Persian Gulf skyrocket. The U.S. will likely [request additional war funding](#) from Congress. In Taiwan, the "Downturn Spring" weather and fuel costs will put immense pressure on the Executive Yuan's "Double-Stabilization" mechanism. Domestic political tension will rise as Li Sichuan's campaign begins to [target TPP voters](#) in New Taipei City.

**Medium Term (1-6 Months):** The global economy will face a "stagflation" threat if oil remains above \$150. China's military budget increase will manifest in [increased naval drills](#) in the South and East China Seas to test U.S. resolve while its forces are diverted. Taiwan may see a "securitization" of its energy infrastructure, with increased [police patrols at refineries](#) and power plants following the UAE strikes.

**Long Term (1-5 Years):** A structural realignment of the Middle East is likely, with the potential for a long-term U.S. occupation or a fragmented Iran. This will accelerate the global transition to renewables and [circular economies](#) as nations seek to decouple from fossil fuel-driven instability. China will likely achieve "Digital Sovereignty" through its [AI Plus](#) initiative, creating a bifurcated global tech ecosystem.

## RECOMMENDATIONS & IMPLICATIONS

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### For International Policy:

- The U.S. and its allies must prioritize the security of the [Malacca and Hormuz Straits](#) to prevent a total global economic shutdown.
- Diplomatic efforts should focus on preventing a [Russia-China-Iran](#) formal military alliance from solidifying during the Middle East power vacuum.
- International regulators must establish "Human-in-the-Loop" standards for [AI music and content](#) to prevent a total collapse of intellectual property frameworks.

### For Private Sector/Investors:

- **Supply Chain Risk:** Diversify away from reliance on Middle Eastern energy and [South Korean semiconductors](#), which are currently at high risk of logistical disruption.
- **Investment Opportunity:** Monitor "AI Hardware" stocks, specifically [TSMC and PCB substrate manufacturers](#), as the demand for high-performance computing remains decoupled from the broader economic cooling.
- **Regulatory Compliance:** EV and battery firms must prepare for [stricter recycling and safety mandates](#) in Taiwan and the EU as the environmental and fire risks of lithium-ion batteries become a political liability.

## ABOUT THIS REPORT

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**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](mailto:kalev.leetaru5@gmail.com). 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>.