

## Media Monitoring: Extract of Press News on Higher Education in Africa

### 1. The Daily Star

#### 'We have to run our universities keeping up with 21st century' (Global)

Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, a noted educationist, has served as the 27th vice chancellor of Dhaka University from 2009 till 2017. A mass communication expert, he was appointed chairman of the board of directors at Bangladesh Sangbad Sangstha (BSS). The Daily Star recently spoke to him on the occasion of the birth centenary of DU where he discussed issues including decline of the university's position in international rankings, politics, teachers' appointment and role of university administration and his expectation. The main task of a university is to turn students into trained manpower with necessary human qualities. In this context, I think DU has played its role properly. At the same time, this university has gifted this country an independent flag. This is such a big achievement that DU cannot be judged on the basis of the generalised definition of a university. But it is also true that DU along with other universities of Bangladesh is lagging behind in different indicators of world rankings. Here, we should keep in mind the lack of adequate investment for the current state of education of the country. What should be done to improve the education quality? If we compare the allocation between the front ranking universities and our universities, we will be able to understand this matter. After the Bangabandhu government, we have seen that the autocratic and military government didn't give due importance to the education sector, which has created a gap. Time has come to fill that void. We will have to run our universities in light of the demands of the 21st century. We will have to think if we are creating new departments in coordination with the advancement of the country's industry. We will have to think whether we are giving practical education to our students. For this, it's imperative to keep an internship system for students in collaboration with those who are involved with the sector. The time of only theoretical education is gone. The education at universities should be completed with both practical and theoretical education. One thing we should consider is that per head expenditure of Harvard or Princeton universities is far higher compared to our universities. Despite this, our students are doing well in the equivalent competition when they go to Harvard, Princeton or Yale. How should a modern and progressive university administration work?

Read more [here](#)

### 2. Mail and Guardian

#### Summit to explore redefining the future of education (Global)

The right kind of focused education is of fundamental importance in building the versatility, adaptability and creativity of new generations of leaders and workforce talent across the spectrum of industries and sectors globally. With the world of work changing rapidly through technological advancements and the emphasis on the fourth industrial revolution in recent years, education has moved with the currents globally. The latest challenge was brought along by Covid-19, which enforced widespread societal change. Some institutions adjusted well in shifting to learning online, as they had already been working on digital models before the pandemic. Others had to adapt as quickly as possible to the demand for digital education as their traditional business models buckled under the strain. The International Finance Corporation reported early this year that about 200-million students in higher education in 188 countries had been affected by campus closures since the start of the pandemic early last year. As tertiary education institutions expand their digital content and schools are forced to move from their classroom-based models to online teaching, there is a real risk of a growing digital divide. The Future of Education Summit 2021, to

be held virtually on 29 July, will tackle this specific issue in education, explore the technologies that will lead change in digital learning, and discuss several other pressing issues. While basic education has to prepare learners for higher education, higher education institutions have to ensure that they prepare their students to be work ready and meet the needs of future employers. One of the panel discussions at the summit is Closing the Skills Gap & Building Capacity: The 21st Century. With current gaps in the fields of science, technology, engineering and maths (Stem), there is a move especially in the more developed countries, to a curriculum that is almost exclusively focused on Stem. On the other hand, to cope in a rapidly changing world of work, learners and students will also need soft skills required by business. A McKinsey Global Institute Report indicates that a shortage of skills will push at least 14% of the global workforce away from their current employment by 2030. Then, the World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report states that by 2025 50% of the world's employees will need reskilling because they will need to adapt to the new technologies that are being developed.

Read more [here](#)

### 3. Times Higher Education

#### Digital degree transcripts 'vital for refugee graduates' (Global)

Syrian researchers have proposed using a high-tech solution to solve a rather low-tech problem – a lack of verified student transcripts – in what they call “two of the most unstable low-income countries: Syria and Sudan”. “There has been a large influx of students from low-income countries as refugees to Europe and other parts of the world. Many of them were without documents to prove their education level, while others lost them during their refugee trip,” according to a report to be published in the September issue of the *International Journal of Educational Development*. “Difficult and sometimes impossible access to academic records...has forced many students to start their study from scratch.” Covid has exacerbated the situation, as many physical university offices are closed. Sulaiman Mouselli, dean of the Faculty of Business Administration at Arab International University, and Ibrahim Alnafrah, an economics researcher at Damascus University, conducted feasibility tests on whether blockchain technology could be used to provide trustworthy and transferable academic records to the 890,000 students and new graduates in those countries. For the paper's authors, the challenge was whether such a system could be implemented amid extreme financial and infrastructure challenges. Professor Mouselli told *Times Higher Education* that finding a solution was “vital in situations of war and displacements where documents usually get lost or damaged”. “All Syrian universities are still using paper documents, and students have to go through the long and costly process of certification” before they can move onto further study, employment or other countries, he said. The lack of digitisation has caused larger issues for HE systems trying to internationalise and build global trust. For example, forgery and fraud can become endemic amid “weak institutional frameworks and governance mechanisms, augmented with loose national standards”. “One of the worst consequences of this situation...is the spread of fake certificates, which invokes international distrust,” the authors write. It “adversely affects the reputation of universities in low-income countries”. Meanwhile, “students and academics alike face constrained mobilities due to concerns related to credentials and recognition”. And if they cannot seek further study or employment that matches their educational background, the problem becomes cyclical. While the use of blockchain in HE has been discussed for years, “the majority of those studies concentrate on high- or medium-income countries”, the authors wrote. “Ironically, low-income countries, which suffer from weak institutional transparency and inefficient administrative structures”, need this technology “even more than developed countries”.

Read more [here](#)

#### 4. Egypt Today

##### **The Future of Higher Education With UH-GAF (Egypt)**

With the Egyptian government's dedicated efforts to enhance the education sector, and in line with the state's 2030 vision focusing on improving the quality of education, The University of Hertfordshire – GAF plays a significant role in the implementation of this vision. Professor Vincent Emery, President of UH-GAF shares valuable insights on how the university will be a valuable addition to the education system and speaks about the university's strategy in creating a model that brings the knowledge and experience of the international education system. Since it is our first time meeting you personally, could you tell us a little bit about yourself, and about the scientific research papers that you are most proud of? It is a pleasure to meet you! My field of expertise is a little bit complicated, but I will try to simplify it. I am a virologist, which is the science of viruses. I have published over 225 research articles, reviews, and books, on solid organs, stem cell transplant and virology in Africa. Today, I live in Egypt, and act as the President of the University of Hertfordshire (UH-GAF) hosted by Global Academic Foundation, located in the New Administrative Capital. I'm extremely proud of my position, as I am committed to providing such a promising country as Egypt with access to the best educational facilities and services. As an established virology professional with an impressive professional bio - in your opinion - when will we go back to "normal"? Do you believe this pandemic will end soon? It is difficult to estimate a specific time that the pandemic might end. For instance, although the SARS Coronavirus-2 may never be eradicated entirely, it doesn't mean that we will never be able to contain and curb infections in the future. A key aspect of working towards controlling the virus's spread is vaccination, as it builds herd immunity in populations and so reducing the ability of the virus to spread in communities. Moreover, the precautionary measures that most countries are currently implementing – with the support of international organizations, such as the World Health Organization – will play a large part in helping us return to "normal." What is your opinion on education in Egypt? How has that formed your vision for UH-GAF as an educational institution? Egypt's educational system is large, complex, and has its fair share of challenges. The government is relentlessly working to improve its structure. One of the main challenges that the country is facing is convincing parents, students, and teachers that education is not just about taking exams in order to obtain a certificate! Rather, education should revolve around the development of a curriculum that balances teaching, self-reflective learning and life-long learning skills, whilst providing knowledge, confidence, and employability skills relevant to students graduating into this dynamic fast-paced world. At UH-GAF we work towards striking this balance. Read more [here](#)

#### 5. The Herald

##### **Colleges venture into number plates production (Zimbabwe)**

Selected colleges and universities have started working on the production of motor vehicle registration plates as the Government seeks to reach the country's self-sufficiency, Higher and Tertiary Education, Innovation, Science and Technology Development Minister Professor Amon Murwira, has said. Prof Murwira said the production of plates that have been in short supply, would be co-ordinated through a national project being implemented by a consortium of universities and colleges at their innovation hubs. He said the universities and colleges were tapping on local resources and skills to develop a system that will ease the shortage of vehicle number plates, create a new generation vehicle registration system that will improve driving standards and prevent fraud among other aspired outcomes. "Cabinet approved the Zimbabwe National Vehicle Number Plate Project and work has started to improve our national capability to produce registration plates locally," he said. "Zimbabwe has the capability to produce new number

plates and develop a modern vehicle registration system that will save us foreign currency, utilise local resources and skills. The project has started and people are working on it.” Last week, the University of Zimbabwe, a technical partner for the Zimbabwe National Vehicle Number Plate Project, advertised a tender inviting prospective companies to bid for the project to manufacture, supply, deliver, install and commission plant equipment and machinery for the production of acrylic number plates. “We are working as a government through our innovation hubs to develop a new system. We need specific machinery for various work assignments given to the colleges and universities to produce number plates and develop a new vehicle registration system,” said Prof Murwira. “It’s Education 5.0 at work. I can tell you this project is going to work out well and will help ease vehicle number plate shortages, reduce foreign currency demand and enhance our own national capabilities.” Some of the aims of the project were to develop a new system that would reduce production turnaround times, introduce e-services and offer scope for the automation of support services and the elimination of the manual process. The country has a backlog of number plates, which are imported and require foreign currency.

Read more [here](#)

## 6. The Citizen

### **Student entrepreneurs taking the business world by storm (Tanzania)**

Although taking up the business mantle while studying is challenging, the benefits at times do tend to be worth the hustle. The skill development and income benefits that come with this path help with independence and self-sufficiency for many students. As days go by, there has been a noticeable increase of establishment of businesses by students, whereas their businesses are both physically and online conducted. Success Magazine met several university student entrepreneurs in different fields who run successful businesses while pursuing their degrees. Noreen, a third-year student at the University of Dar es Salaam pursuing a Bachelor of art and development studies, is an accessories business owner who recently opened her first physical store at the Makumbusho Bus Stand after the success of her online store. She started her business journey in 2019 as a first year student after being complimented on her taste in jewelry by her circle of friends and strangers alike. “There were times I would be approached to give insight on one’s choice in jewelry. I saw an opportunity to start a business in something I like and make an income,” she says. Noreen started her business with about Sh300,000 worth of jewelry and with time, she took notice of the growth of her online presence and the profits made. “Being a student and a businesswoman is difficult but it is worth the risk because I for one have learned many life and entrepreneurial skills. There were plenty of times that I would be called for class and I had to either end the customer’s call or excuse myself from the class to listen to the enquiries,” Noreen says. For Noreen, she had no prior experience in the business field since she started it based on a passion. However, over time, she began reading and researching on the ways to make an online business successful including how to engage with customers, growing a business through online advertisements and how to profit from the business ‘Reenysoul Accessories’ has now reached about 32,000 followers on Instagram. Noreen mentions that amongst the challenges she faced in the early stages of her business is earning trust from customers on the legitimacy of her online store due to the belief that people get scammed by online businesses. Unlike Noreen who is in the jewelry business, Zaituni sells self-made skin and hair products. She is a third year student pursuing a Bachelor’s degree in banking finance at the Institute of Finance and Management (IFM). Growing up, Zaituni has always had a sensitive skin which demanded frequent change of lotions to treat pimples that left scars, challenges that made it difficult for her to maintain a blemish-free skin.

Read more [here](#)

## 7. Front Page Africa

### **Liberia: Senator Tokpa Wants Ministry of Higher and Technical Education Established (Liberia)**

An Act seeking to establish the Ministry of Higher and Technical Education within the Republic of Liberia has been submitted to the Liberian Senate. The Act is seeking to amend the one establishing the New Education Reform Act of 2011, Chapter 4, Section 4.2(d,e) to detach therefrom and amend the Act establishing the National Commission on Higher Education of 1989. The Bill was submitted Thursday 8 July 2021 by Bong County Senator Henrique F. Tokpa, for the timely consideration of the Plenary of the Liberian Senate for its passage into law. Senator Saah H. Joseph of Montserrado County is the Co-Sponsor of the bill. Among other things, the Act seeks to elevate the Commission on Higher Education and establish the Ministry of Higher and Technical Education (MoHTE), and the amalgamation of the many divisions of vocation situated in the Ministries State, Agriculture, Youth and Sports, and Education. In a communication to the President Pro-Tempore and members of the Senate, Dr. Tokpa said the Ministry of Education has mainly been focusing on administering the affairs of Pre-Schools, as well as Primary and Secondary with little supervision on tertiary education. According to Senator Tokpa, who chairs the Senate's Committee on Autonomous Agency and Commission, the creation of the Ministry of Higher and Technical Education will address this concern and give Tertiary Education clear representation in Cabinet meetings, where decisions and policies are made. He said the Act covers the establishment, Regulation, management, supervision, monitoring, and evaluation of all post-Secondary degree granting higher institutions of Learning within the Republic of Liberia without any Prejudice. He disclosed that it shall specifically be applied to all Universities, Colleges, Technical and Vocational Institutions, Maritime and Forestry Institutions, Teachers Training Institutions, except excluded by an Act of Legislation. The objectives of this Act are also to govern and regulate the educational system and the delivery and management of the system. It shall encompass the formulation of broad policy guidelines for the establishment of institutions of Higher Education in Liberia, and serve as the regulatory body for all post- Secondary institutions offering professional certificates, diplomas, and degrees. When established, the Ministry of Higher Institutions of Learning will monitor, evaluate and accredit all institutions of higher learning, approve new and existing programs for funding, among others.

Read more [here](#)

## 8. Modern Ghana

### **CTVET organizes virtual conference to celebrate WYSD 21 (Ghana)**

The Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET) in partnership with the National Youth Authority (NYA) and the Ghana National Union of Technical Students (GNUTS) organized a virtual conference to mark this year's World Youth Skills Day (WYSD). The conference brought together young people, TVET institutions, employers, policy makers and development partners to discuss the need to prepare Ghana's youth today for the jobs of tomorrow; under the theme 'Building Youth Skills for Industry Now and Beyond'. Speaking at the event, the Deputy Minister for Education Hon. Gifty Twum Ampofo said government has put in place policies, strategies and legal frameworks to reform and strengthen TVET systems in the country to make it attractive to the youth and responsive to labour market demands. She pledged government's commitment to equipping the youth with employable skills to empower them to contribute meaningfully to the sustainable development of the country and urged "all stakeholders to ensure the continuity of skills development and to introduce training programmes to bridge skills gaps." "Solutions to skills gaps need to be reimagined in a way that considers not only the realities of the present, but also the full range of possibilities for the future," she added. The Ag. Director



General of CTNET Dr. Fred Kyei Asamoah in his welcome address congratulated the youth of Ghana for the incredible ways they continue to cope to bounce back even stronger, in these challenging times. During a panel discussion, Dr. Asamoah enumerated various initiatives being undertaken by the government in partnership with development partners through CTNET, to prepare the youth for now and the future. These include the Ghana TVET Voucher Project which offers free demand-oriented training to improve access to decent employment; the Jobs and Skills Project which is aimed at providing over 200,000 jobs to Ghanaian youth through industry-led skills training. Others are the establishment of Sector Skills Bodies to ensure that industry is at the centre of skills training and the upgrading and modernization of TVET institutions to improve the quality of TVET delivery. He said, “post COVID, things are going to be digitized, automated and technological advancement as never seen before is going to happen.” He therefore urged the youth to take advantage of technology to position themselves to be relevant in the emerging jobs economy.

Read more [here](#)

### 9. Daily News Egypt

#### **Egypt puts final touches on energy workshops, mechatronics lab at New Cairo Technological University (Egypt)**

Egypt’s Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research announced, on Monday, that the New Cairo Technological University (NCTU) has completed preparations on several new laboratories and workshops. The new facilities mean students at the university can access solar energy workshops, a mechatronics lab, and additional computer laboratories. Khaled Abdel Ghaffar, Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research, reviewed a report on the NCTU’s activities during the 2020-2021 academic year. The report outlined that the university organised many training programmes for students at a number of different industrial bodies and institutions. The report stated that the university also organised several weekly training visits for new students on the autotronics, mechatronics, new and renewable energy, information technology (IT), prosthetics, and prosthetic devices programmes. The training programmes aim to keep students informed on various devices and equipment used within industrial institutions, and to improve the practical and scientific skills of the university’s graduates. The report added that new technological programmes have been added, including the Production and Processing of Petroleum Products programme. This was set up in cooperation with the Egyptian General Petroleum Corporation (EGPC) and the Egyptian Petroleum Research Institute (EPRI).

Read more [here](#)

### 10. IOL

#### **Department of Higher Education launches the 2021 State of the Nation book (South Africa)**

Durban - Deputy Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation Buti Manamela has launched the 2021 edition of the State of the Nation, a flagship publication of the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC). This year’s edition is titled *Ethics, Politics, Inequality: New Directions*, and is a timely publication in light of the current Covid-19 pandemic and the recent events in South Africa that have brought to the fore the deep inequalities and levels of poverty. According to the lead editor of this volume, Professor Narnia Bohler-Muller, the book was written before the pandemic and its context has become clear and relevant during the pandemic. The latest volume will help South Africans think through and navigate the ‘new normal’ in which we find ourselves in, with the focus on unavoidable political and socio-economic consequences and interventions required. It also provides deep insights to stimulate rethinking and reimagining changes that prioritise how we live, interact and engage with one another and the

government. The insights help South Africans to consider a more ethical and caring way of life in response to the harsh realities of poverty and inequality in South Africa. One of the four panellists present, Dr Mabel Sithole, said the pandemic has tested leaders in every sphere of society and their resilience, compassion and decision-making had been and continued to be under the spotlight. “South Africa, like no other moment in its democratic dispensation, is confronted with ethical and policy dilemmas which have tested the strength of our institutions. From health care to education, and the recent wave of looting and unrest, the country is gasping for air.” The 2021 publication is the 10th edition and was edited by Professor Crain Soudien, former chief executive of the HSRC; Professor Vasu Reddy, dean of the Faculty of Humanities at the University of Pretoria; and Professor Narnia Bohler-Muller, head of the HSRC’s Developmental, Capable and Ethical State (DCES) division.

Read more [here](#)

### 11. University World News

#### Why is China falling behind on breakthrough innovation? (Global)

This past year witnessed not only a global health crisis, but also a dramatic hit on China’s academic profession. There has been a U-turn with respect to academic appraisal exercises in Chinese universities.

In the past decade, enormous weight was placed on publications in journals sourced by the Science Citation Index (SCI), a commercial citation index that records citations of articles published in its indexed science, medicine and technology journals. Those journals are thus considered to be leading, and publishing in those journals would not only lead to merit pay but also preference in appraisal exercises, leading to professional promotion and talent programme opportunities, in turn bringing increased personal income and research resources. For example, a paper published in a top SCI-indexed journal could earn a bonus of up to US\$85,000. Consequently, China’s annual outputs of papers published in SCI-indexed journals soared from 120,000 in 2009 to 450,000 in 2019. Paradoxically, China’s robust production of research publications did not translate into innovation. This was exposed by the US-China trade war, which revealed that China has been suffering from a severe deficiency in control over key technologies and intellectual property. Top Chinese universities are now perceived as being substandard in major technology development and transfer. A leading scientist in China, Shi Yigong, revealed a stunning reason for this behind the scenes: Chinese universities do not produce many original or breakthrough innovations. He further warned that the current campaign for boosting publications would not necessarily lead to a boost in science and engineering. Rather, it could usher in an appearance of prosperity, based merely on size and quantity of research publications. As a result, China’s ministry of education and ministry of science and technology released a policy document in February 2020 that officially discouraged the previously sanctioned practice of using the SCI as a main criterion for research appraisal. According to the new policy, SCI-related indicators (for example, numbers of articles published in SCI-indexed journals, impact factors of the journals and numbers of citations of publications) were not to be accepted as direct evidence of research merit and the practice of paying researchers bonuses for publishing in SCI journals will be prohibited. In December 2020, the ministry of education and five other central agencies (including the Chinese Communist Party’s Central Organization Department and Central Publicity Department) issued new guidelines concerning the professional advancement of higher education teaching staff, which mandates a rectification of the practices of “appraising articles by publishing journals and granting paramountcy to SCI-indexed journals”.

Read more [here](#)

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