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Jahangirnagar Univ burns shrubs hurting environ

JU CORRESPONDENT

Disregarding the local ecology, at least four bushy areas have been burnt on the Jahangirnagar University campus in the last few days to keep places around roads and buildings clean.

The practice has been going on for a long time, but the administration denied they did it.

A professor of environmental science of the university, Khabir Uddin, said, "It will not only affect trees and animals but also damage land permanently; as micro-bacteria and other micro-components in the soil, which are must for land fertility, get destroyed."

He said the burning would drive away animals like squirrel, bird, mongoose, lizard, and water monitor that

find their homes in the bushes.

The professor demanded immediate measures to stop such burning.

The bushes in front of AFM Kamal Uddin hall, north of Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Hall, behind Al Biruni Hall, near the Water Research Centre, and the chemistry department were set on fire recently.

A university gardener was caught by some students while he set fire to a bush near the chemistry department yesterday.

Hasan Al Mahmud, a second-year anthropology student, quoted the gardener as saying that officials asked him to set fire to the bush. He declined to name anyone.

The JU campus is frequented by people for its rich biodiversity, which also attracts flocks of migratory birds

every winter.

Prof Monawar Hossain, chairman of the zoology department, said, "I have personally met the estate office officials expressing concern over the issue, and it seems that the authorities are not playing their due role to protect its environment."

Also an organiser of the annual butterfly fair on the campus, he said, "Butterflies, birds and other eco-friendly components have already been affected by the burning."

Md Nurul Amin, acting officer of the estate office, denied its staff burnt those places even when he was told that a gardener said officials had asked them to do so.

JU Registrar Abu Bakr Siddique said, "Prompt action must be taken after knowing who set the fire."