

## '20,000 rare books being damaged at DU library

Over 20,000 rare books, considered assets for the country's researchers and booklovers, are getting damaged at the Dhaka University Central Library simply for lack of maintenance, reports UNB.

"The books lying at the reading rooms on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> floors of the library have been the foods for white ants," said Sazzad Hossain, a brilliant student of International Relations of the university, told the UNB correspondent.

Apart from the white ant attacks, he said, most of the books got damped due to rain-splash and over-moisture during monsoon as those have been shelved on outdated bookracks.

Library sources said the authorities have wasted about Tk 50 lakh in the name of developing Graphical Library Automation System (GLAS) software for preserving all books of the country's largest library. "But the software could not be used as it was found ineffective for countries like Bangladesh," the official said preferring anonymity.

Anisur Rahman, a student of Information Science and Library Management (ISLM) department, said the library that once placed 7<sup>th</sup> in the world for preserving oriental manuscripts has failed to

maintain the record of its glorious past as it is grappling with various problems.

"Not only these books, but also many manuscripts are getting damaged," Anis said, adding that ISLM students could be used to look after of the library as they know the job better than anyone else.

The university library began its journey with 18,000 books inherited from the Dhaka College and Dhaka Law College. A notable feature in the development of the library is the collection of research materials for M Phil and PhD courses. The India Office Library in London provided a rich source of collection of books of rare value in different forms.

In 2009, the library holds a collection of more than 617,000 volumes, including bound volumes of periodicals. In addition, it has a collection of over 30,000 manuscripts on various languages and a large number of microfilms, microfiche and CDs. It subscribes to over 300 current foreign journals.

Another growing problem is book stealing. The university library loses a good number of books every as a section of its students and a vested quarter are engaged in book stealing. Some of these stolen books are seen being sold on footpaths in Nilkhet and Shahbagh areas of the university.