




into built-up areas



Original master plan neglected during structural development

Jahangirnagar University campus, known for its verdant fields, woods, and waterbodies, has lost nearly 40 percent of its waterbodies over the last three and a half decades.

The university's vegetation cover has also shrunk by 26.5 percent during the same period, according to a study.

In contrast, the JU saw its built-up area going up by 159.3 percent. Around  5 acres of land were converted into built-up areas, said the study



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## Once a haven for birds, now on deathbed

It shows that waterbodies covered an area of 122.4 acres in 1988, but the figure dropped to 73.58 acres last year. The vegetation area of 388.80 acres shrunk to 285.88 acres over the same period.

The university is situated on over 697 acres.



According to the study, Jahangirnagar University's original master plan, designed by renowned architect

The research found that the university's new registrar building, new arts building, and several dormitories of male and female students were constructed after removing a significant portion of vegetation cover.



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## JU's largest lake neglected



The study further said much of the architecture of the buildings, constructed on the campus in the last

more carbon, and if the vegetation cover is reduced, it affects the microclimate and ecological services.

If any area faces deforestation, temperature will rise subsequently and that has a negative impact on the biodiversity, said Farhadur, also an associate professor of urban and regional planning at JU.


Another member of the team, Mashura Shammi, said the construction of academic and administrative buildings without proper environmental and social assessments, and also in violation of the master plan is to blame for the decrease in waterbodies and vegetation area.



Mashura, also a professor of environmental sciences at JU, said the drainage system, footpath, sewage

Students and teachers have long been criticising the authorities for taking up development projects without proper environmental and social assessments. They demanded a master plan for the university saying that the authorities violated the existing one.

Students staged demonstrations over the felling of trees to make room for different structures to be built under different projects. The ongoing project, involving around Tk 1,445 crore, is one of them.

Under the six-year project launched in 2018, a total of 22 new buildings and  extension building are being constructed. Construction of some of these buildings have been completed.

after knocking down the old ones, land will not be wasted and the environmental damage will be much less," he said.

Renowned economist Prof Anu Muhammad, also a former faculty member of JU, said, "I used to call the university a 'living laboratory'. But the present environment is not like that."

He said the biggest damage happened to JU over the last decade.

"The authorities keep saying that they are preparing a new master plan, but we have not seen one yet. They are cutting trees in the absence of a new master plan.

"This is an administration governed by contractors," said Anu Muhammad.

Environmental decline  
at Jahangirnagar  
University  
environment

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