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CONVOCATION

Jadavpur University ignores governor, decides to hold convocation



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Jadavpur University File image

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Summary

- A senior special secretary in the governor's secretariat had on December 19 written to JU's officiating vice-chancellor, BuddhedeB Sau, saying the VC had not been authorised to convene any meeting "of the Court or the Convocation" because of an ongoing legal battle over the appointment of officiating VCs

Jadavpur University (JU) will hold its annual convocation on December 24 despite objections from the governor, who is ex-officio chancellor of all state-aided universities, officials said.

A senior special secretary in the governor's secretariat had on December 19 written to JU's officiating vice-chancellor, BuddhedeB Sau, saying the VC had not been authorised to convene any meeting "of the Court or the Convocation" because of an ongoing legal battle over the appointment of officiating VCs.

A letter from Sau to the chancellor on Friday evening says: "May it also be noted that after receiving your letter, the honourable members of the executive council met urgently on December 20, 2024, at 4pm and resolved to hold the annual convocation on December 24, 2023. The honourable members resolved to request the Vice-Chancellor to convene a meeting of the Court."

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"Sir, finally it may be noted that the students have shown instances of Convocation being held in your august presence at the University of Kalyani and Vidyasagar University in very recent times. In view of the above, we cannot but hold The Court meeting as per clause 67 (1), Chapter 5 of the statute 1982. This is for your kind information please," the letter says.

The VC has also mentioned in his letter that keeping the convocation in abeyance, as suggested by the chancellor, may lead to student unrest on the campus.

"Deferment of the annual convocation, 2023, at the very last hour or keeping it in abeyance will undermine the long-cherished tradition of the university and may result in severe student unrest in the campus which in turn will disrupt the regular teaching-learning process," the letter says.

"All necessary arrangements like the order of 122 medals (including gold medals) and certificates, stage decoration, paper advertisements, fire services, electrical arrangements, pandal preparation... for the annual convocation 2023 have been completed..." the letter says.

“In our compliance report to the chancellor, we have explained why we want to hold the court meeting (for the convocation),” Sau later said.

Asked to comment on JU’s decision, the chancellor’s office sent an email to **Metro** on Friday night: “Your mail is received and is being examined.”

After receiving the letter from the chancellor’s office on December 19, the university wrote to the state advocate-general Kishore Datta seeking his opinion on the matter.

The higher education department had last week granted JU permission to hold the annual convocation by allowing the university to conduct meetings of the executive council and the court to discuss issues related to the event.

But a problem in holding the convocation arose when the chancellor refused to allow JU to call a meeting of its court to ratify decisions taken by the authorities in regard to the convocation.

According to the rules, the formalities related to the convocation are required to be approved by the court, whose chairman is the chancellor.

Goutam Maity, a member of the executive council, said they could not figure out why the chancellor objected to JU’s convocation, considering that he recently attended the convocation of Vidyasagar and Kalyani universities.

“The outcome of the case in the Supreme Court will have an impact on those two universities as well,” said Maity.

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