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JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

Bengal governor C.V. Ananda Bose, removes JU's officiating VC Buddhadeb Sau

Convocation illegal, says Raj Bhavan statement

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY | PUBLISHED 24.12.23, 06:01 AM



Preparations being made on Saturday afternoon for the convocation at Jadavpur University

Bengal governor C.V. Ananda Bose, the chancellor of Jadavpur University, removed officiating vice-chancellor Buddhadeb Sau from his position on Saturday evening, hours before the university's annual convocation.

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"The authorization given to Prof. Buddhdeb Sau as per order No. CU.... dated 17th August, 2023, to exercise the powers and perform the duties office of the Vice Chancellor, Jadavpur University, till further orders, is withdrawn. This order will take immediate effect," said an order signed by Bose.

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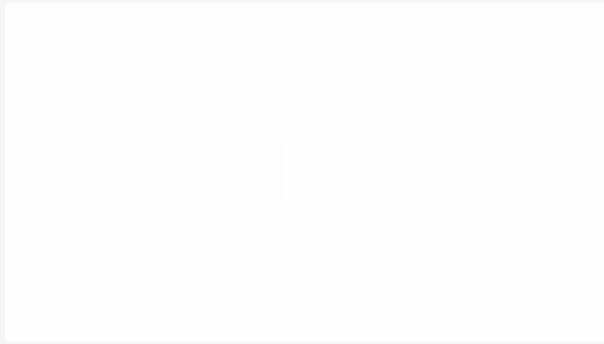
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A Raj Bhavan source said the VC was removed as he decided to hold the convocation meeting though the chancellor had said on December 19 that Sau should keep the event in abeyance.

A JU official said a letter from Raj Bhavan reached the office of the officiating VC around 8pm.

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The VC said: "I have heard that a letter from Raj Bhavan was handed to the security staff. I am yet to see it."

A press statement that the chancellor's office sent made it clear that holding the convocation was one of the grounds for removal.

The Raj Bhavan press statement called the convocation illegal.

"Public money incurred on this unauthorised convocation will be recovered from the salary of the VC and others responsible. Students have complained in the Chancellor's office that they had to spend the hard earned money of their poor parents to come for the illegal convocation convened by VC under political pressure. The Chancellor's office has sought legal opinion on whether the money can be recovered from the VC and political forces which pressurised the VC to convene the illegal convocation."

"Enquiry committee will be constituted to enquire into the serious allegations against VC."

The chancellor in August removed Amitabha Datta, also a JU professor he had chosen earlier, and appointed Sau, who is associated with a teachers' forum that owes allegiance to the BJP.

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Education minister Bratya Basu criticised the chancellor's decision.

He posted on his X handle: "I have come to know from media reports that the Professor authorised to exercise the powers of the Vice Chancellor of Jadavpur University has been removed by the Governor! It appears that he is hellbent on destroying the Higher Education ambience in the state. For that, he is not only disregarding the advice of the elected State Government, he has stooped to new low by disrespecting the interim judgment of the Highest Court of the Land to maintain status quo in the universities! He has bared his fangs and nails!"

A JU official said students would be awarded degrees on Sunday. However, the university will decide on Sunday morning whether they would merely hold a degree-awarding ceremony, considering that the officiating VC has been removed.

"Since the chancellor signs the Certificates awarded to the PhD recipients, we are yet to decide who will confer these certificates. Other graduating students can be awarded degree certificates by the pro-VC and deans," the official said.

Last year, Bose presided over the convocation which is traditionally held on December 24.

The invite sent to dignitaries this year only mentions the vice-chancellor and guest-in-chief and not the chancellor.

UGC chairman M. Jagadesh Kumar will be the chief guest.

Sau said: "The university has, however, invited the chancellor for his presence and grace the convocation."

The Raj Bhavan statement says: "Chancellor got complaints that VC is defying Supreme Court orders. Honourable governor (HG) said no VC will be allowed to defy the Supreme Court of India. Supreme Court is our ultimate hope.

"OP Mishra (Omprakash Mishra, a JU professor of international relations who is a critic of the governor) against whom the inquiry committee has prima facie proved allegations of corruption, swindling and harassment will be dealt with firmly as per law."

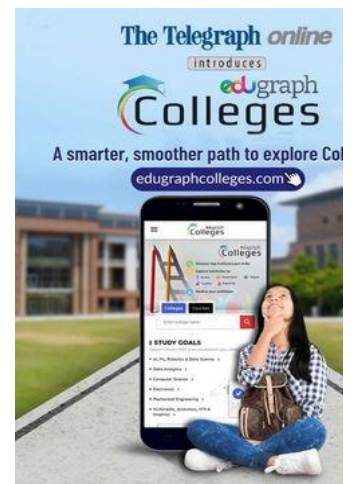
The governor's secretariat had on December 19 written to JU's officiating vice-chancellor saying he had not been authorised to convene a meeting "of the Court or the Convocation" because of an ongoing legal battle between the chancellor and the state government over the appointment of officiating VCs.

About not printing the chancellor's name on the card, officiating VC Sau said: "To include his name, the university would require the consent of the chancellor. Since the chancellor asked the university to keep the convocation in abeyance, we could not seek his consent for printing his name on the card. The university has, however, invited him for his presence and grace the convocation."

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