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JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

Jadavpur University pro-VC hands degrees to the graduating students

University tweaks protocol so certificates do not face legal challenge

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY | PUBLISHED 25.12.23, 05:58 AM



Jadavpur University File picture

Jadavpur University held its annual convocation on Sunday, but officiating vice-chancellor Buddhadeb Sau, who attended the event, did not award the degree certificates amid a controversy over his continuance in the post.

Sau, who was removed by governor C.V. Ananda Bose on Saturday evening and was asked by the state government at night to "continue to exercise and perform the duties and hold

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the convocation”, assigned the responsibility of awarding the degree certificates to pro-VC Amitabha Datta.

UGC chairman M. Jagadesh Kumar, who was invited to be the guest-in-chief at the event, did not come.

A JU official said the decision to delegate the power to hand the degree certificates to the graduating students to the pro-VC was adopted by the university’s court on Sunday morning.

“The decision was taken to ensure that the graduating students did not have to take the degree certificates from someone who had been removed from the post of officiating VC by the governor, who is ex-officio chancellor of JU,” said an official at the university.

“If one moves court saying the students took degree certificates from someone who had ceased to be the VC, the degree recipients would have landed in trouble. So a solution was worked out.”

Sau said he acted as resolved by the court, which met just an hour before the convocation. “Decisions were taken in the interest of the students,” he said.

Early on Sunday, Sau issued a statement: “A letter has been received from Governor House informing that my position has been withdrawn as Vice Chancellor of Jadavpur University. On the other hand, an offer has been received from the State Government to maintain the status quo and continue my duty as Vice Chancellor of Jadavpur University. For me, the interest of students is an uncompromisable issue. In view of this, I would place these two documents before our Court scheduled to be held on 24.12.2023 at 9am.”

“The Court would arrange the needful as per statute and act of Jadavpur University to conduct the scheduled Convocation programme.”

The court met at a chamber in the open-air theatre, where the convocation is held. The meeting ended at 10.45am.

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Sau then came to the dais and announced: "I declare the convocation open. I delegate the power to pro-VC to continue the rest of the programme."

Sau sat on his chair and pro-VC Datta came in front of the dais to award the PhD degree certificates, which were signed by Sau as VC.

Usually, the chancellor declares the convocation open and delegates the power to the VC to award the PhD degree certificates.

The governor issued the order removing Sau as officiating VC a day after JU decided to go ahead with the convocation despite the chancellor asking the university to keep the event in abeyance.

A letter from the chancellor's office cited an ongoing legal battle over the appointment of officiating VCs as the reason for asking JU not to hold the convocation now.

When the time came for awarding the degree certificates to graduate and postgraduate students, the VC again delegated power to the pro-VC and the deans.

When asked why he had to delegate the power, Sau said: "Two different letters came from Raj Bhavan and the state government. A government which has been elected by the people of the state has an obligation to protect an individual. That's what the Constitution says. A letter has come from the state government, asking me to continue. Both the letters were tabled before the court. The court requested me to hold the convocation as the VC. I have honoured that wish."

When asked why he held the annual convocation despite being removed from the post of VC by the chancellor, Sau said: "The court must be aware of the legal complications and their outcome. The interest of the students is supreme. The court has recognised me as the VC."




Will he continue as VC after Sunday?

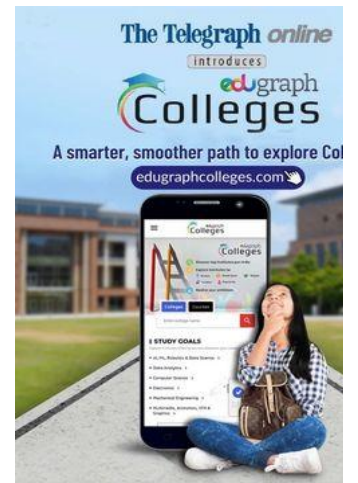
"I cannot say anything now. I will act according to the act (that governs JU)," he said.

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University Grants Commission (UGC)

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