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Students unite, protest on campus against 'last-minute bid to scuttle convocation'

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Kolkata: The governor's perceived attempt to scuttle the Jadavpur University (JU) convocation at the last moment has ended up unifying all sections of students, including those who were earlier critical of the state's handling of the issue.

Sunday's turn of events brought students from different political factions as well as those politically inactive to the same page. "I am really thankful that the VC took the discretion to be present today. It shows his support for us, especially because we are disappointed that the chancellor and UGC chairman did not come," said PhD recipient Amio Kumar Baul.

About a hundred students with various political affiliations raised black flags in unison, putting aside their differing beliefs. "Across the parties and to a large extent, across campus, every student will have words of condemnation against governor's actions," said a protesting student.

Unsure of whether the convocation was to run as scheduled or be cancelled, almost all graduating students got little to no sleep on Saturday night, especially those travelling long distances to attend. Mrinmoy Bharati from the Sundarbans said he could not sleep at all the previous night. Arijit Das came from Tripura to collect his degree in

library science. "I was very tense, but I am glad that the convocation took place despite all difficulties," said Arnab Basu, recipient of a PhD in physics.

Differently abled graduates, many of whom travelled for hours to take part in the convocation, also walked out of the gates with smiles. Visually impaired student Sanjib Rajak, a recipient of a PhD in comparative literature, had been breaking out in sweat while bringing his wife, mother and daughter to the campus. "PhD is several years of hard work, so the stakes were very high." PG in history, Piyu Chakrabarty, also visually impaired, said many differently abled students felt comfortable that the worst ordeal was past them and they could now focus on their career with a certificate in hand.

Wheelchair-bound Rini Biswas, who suffers from muscular dystrophy, said she had got fever when she was informed that the convocation was doubtful.

PhD recipient in Bengali, Saikat Mistry, said, "There is a concern over new certificates if this one with Sau's name is made redundant. Our degrees matter the most to us." MPhil research scholar Subhajit Das echoed Biswas. "It's not only a ceremony but also the most important part of the student life."

46-year old Rajeshwari Das, who completed her bachelor's in pharmacy in 2023, was present on Sunday, making it one of the rarest events for the pharmaceutical technology department as well as the engineering faculty. "Wearing the robe was special as it acknowledges my journey and hardships," said Das, a mother of two. The Bankura resident passed HS in 1995 and did her graduation in English after 12 years due to family issues. "I had to travel a long distance, unsure if the convocation would at all happen. I am relieved to have my certificate," said Kushal Chakrabarty, PhD student, physics.

TMCP unit head at JU, Rajanya Halder, who was to get a degree on Sunday, boycotted the event citing inaction on the part of the authorities in the ragging case.

(Inputs from

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