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Sau is JU vice-chancellor in first post-convocation notice

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Kolkata: The registrar of Jadavpur University issued a notice on Monday, stating the vice-chancellor was pleased to declare December 26 (Tuesday) a holiday on account of the annual convocation held on Sunday. The mention of the VC in the notice indicated officiating VC Buddhadeb Sau was not ready to bow down to governor and chancellor C V Ananda Bose's directive without a fight.

Registrar Snehamanju Basu said, "The notice was issued, based on Sau's announcement on the convocation stage on Sunday, when he had declared Tuesday as a holiday."

Raj Bhavan on Saturday evening —hours before the university's convocation on Sunday, had sent a letter, terminating Sau as the interim VC. But the higher education department sent a letter around midnight, asking Sau he "might continue to exercise and perform the duties and let the convocation be held" after he wrote to the ed department about the crisis.

Sau questioned Bose's move to terminate him from the post on Saturday evening, ahead of the convocation. "The governor's motive was to stall the convocation and he repeatedly tried to do that. That is also the reason he removed me on Saturday evening. My fault is I tried to protect students' interests and hold the convocation," Sau told TOI on Tuesday, adding according to the Act and statute of JU, the court meeting was called by the registrar under the direction of the VC to ratify the students' degrees. "We explained to the governor the tradition of JU and how the interest of the students were involved and sought permission for the court meeting. He denied twice. The second time, he cited that certain issues were sub judice in the SC. But within the same legal

parameters, he had given two other state universities the permission to hold convocation.” He added, “There should be a fair trial if court meetings and convocation can be stopped like this when students’ futures are concerned.” Sau also questioned the legality of the termination letter and the process of his removal.

Raj Bhavan had indicated it might move the Calcutta High Court, challenging Sau’s right to hold office and the “unauthorized” convocation held on Sunday. A Raj Bhavan source said the degrees issued would not be valid in the eyes of law and this might cause irreparable damage to the students in future. But Sau said, “The convocation details were sent to the governor, who was invited to attend the court meeting and the convocation. If he thinks the convocation was unlawful and unauthorized, he could have himself gone there to tackle the situation on Sunday. Instead, he is raising questions after the convocation was organised.”

When TOI asked Sau if he would continue as the acting VC, he said, “Don’t ask me such questions.”

Not all seemed comfortable with the “vice-chancellor” mentioned in the holiday notice. Electrical engineering professor Arindam Sil said, “Since there is a confusion on the locus standi of the VC following two contradictory orders, the word ‘vice-chancellor’ could have been avoided.” English HoD Manojit Mandal said, “There is no bar on Sau continuing as the officiating VC. But it is up to him to decide.”