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# JU seeks legal advice, edu dept opinion on VC status

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Kolkata: Amid ambiguity about the vice-chancellor's status, Jadavpur University on Thursday sought clarification from the higher education department on who should have the signing authority and would grant financial and administrative approvals. The authority also sought legal opinion on whether the university at all had a VC or not.

"I have written to the higher education department, seeking clarification. We have sought legal opinion. A meeting has been called on Friday where officials and HoDs will have a discussion," said registrar Snehamanju Basu.

On December 23, on the eve of the convocation, Raj Bhavan had sent a letter, terminating Buddhadeb Sau from the officiating VC's post. But the higher education department wrote around midnight, saying Sau "may continue to exercise and perform the duties and let the convocation be held". Despite governor-and-chancellor C V Ananda Bose's termination order, Sau had returned to the VC's office on Wednesday, citing the state letter.

But Sau's move prompted Jadavpur University Officers' Association (JUOA) to write to the registrar on Thursday, highlighting their concerns about legal trouble over Sau taking administrative and financial decisions in the current situation. President of JUOA Rajat Ray said, "We execute the university's daily operations and depend on the VC's approval. Legal validity of the approvals is imperative to avoid any complications. We want the university to seek legal opinion from three senior advocates on the VC's status, given the contradictory orders."

JUTA, too, wrote to the registrar, seeking to know who in the university could sign official documents. As chancellor Bose had appointed Sau as the interim VC and also terminated his tenure, the teachers wondered whether Sau's signature would still be considered valid. They feared academic and administrative work would come to a halt. "We requested Basu to clarify from the court whether Sau could legally continue as the VC. When we asked her on Thursday, if the university has a VC, she said she could not answer. She said she has written to the higher education department and sought legal opinion but has not received any reply yet," said JUTA general secretary Partha Pratim Ray.

"A section of teachers and officers is trying to create this confusion after the university's court accepted the state letter. Why didn't the court accept the chancellor's order?" said officiating Sau, adding he would act according to the state letter. Unlike on Wednesday, Sau neither took the VC's car nor visited the VC's office on Thursday. Sources said he walked to the maths department from his quarters and remained there till evening.