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**PROTEST**

# Pro-vice-chancellor, registrar and other officials of Jadavpur University protest VC absence

Officiating VC Buddhadeb Sau, who was told by the higher education department on Friday that he could continue in that position, has not been attending office despite the clarification

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY | PUBLISHED 09.01.24, 05:55 AM



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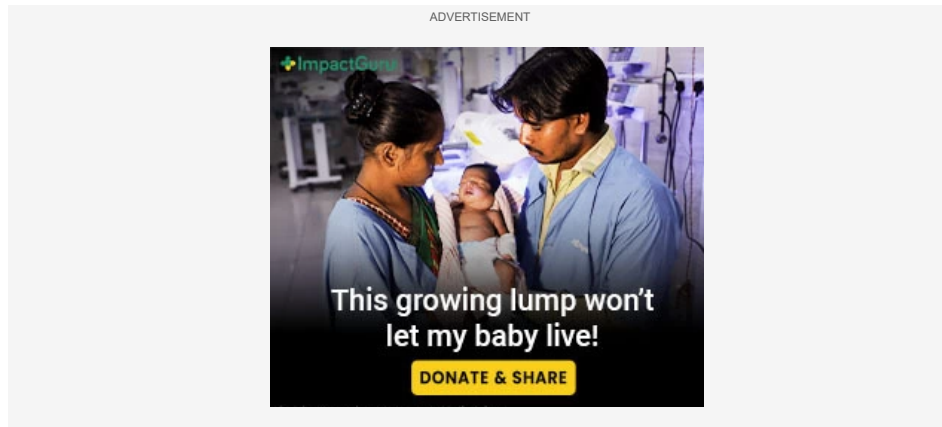
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Jadavpur University

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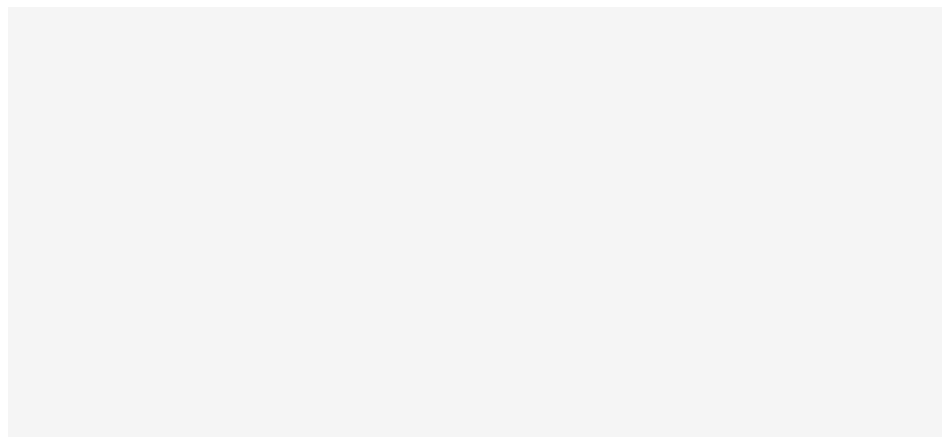
The pro-vice-chancellor, registrar and some other officials of Jadavpur University (JU) held a sit-in on the campus on Monday to protest the administrative deadlock which, they alleged, stemmed from the absence of a vice-chancellor.

Officiating VC Buddhadeb Sau, who was told by the higher education department on Friday that he could continue in that position, has not been attending office despite the clarification.



Pro-VC Amitava Datta, registrar Snehamanju Basu and other officials sat on chairs in the corridor on the ground floor of Aurobindo Bhavan, JU's administrative headquarters, in the afternoon.

A familiar site of protest for students had different occupants. A banner that hung behind the protest site read: "The day-to-day regular activities and the decision-making process has been completely stalled on the campus in the wake of letter and counter letter issued by the chancellor and the higher education department."



The governor is the ex-officio chancellor of JU and other state-aided universities.

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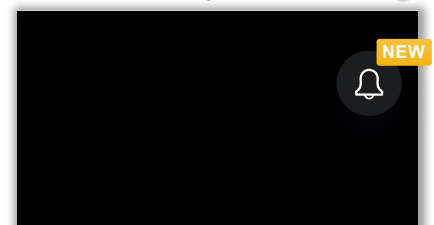


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The higher education department had clarified on Friday that Sau, whose removal the chancellor had ordered on December 23, could continue as officiating VC.

The clarification came a day after the chancellor's office wrote to the pro-VC and the registrar to ensure that Sau did not exercise "any unauthorised authority in the administration of the university".

Sau has not signed any files since December 23.

A professor of mathematics at JU, Sau attended the annual convocation on December 24.

On December 28, registrar Basu had written to the higher education department asking who on the campus was authorised to grant administrative and financial approvals.

Basu's communication to the department followed letter from officials and teachers of the university seeking clarity on the issue.

Sau had told **Metro** on January 2 that he would not "visit the office of the VC" and "sign any files" till the state government clarified his role. But even after the clarification, he has been staying away from the VC's office.

His absence triggered the protest from the officials.

Sau told Metro on Monday: "There are contradictory orders from the chancellor and the state government. The Supreme Court is likely to hear a case over the fate of the officiating VCs soon. Amid this confusion, how can I go to the office? Let the court give its verdict."

Registrar Basu told Metro on Monday: "Day-to-day tasks are pending. We cannot pay the salary to the maintenance staff because the bill requires the approval of the VC."

Basu said: "We have to hold meetings of the committees ahead of the visit of the National Board of Accreditation and National Assessment and Accreditation Council. These meetings cannot be held without any direction from the VC."

She said the education department's letter to her clarifying Sau's role had been forwarded to the VC. "But we have not heard from him. An administrative deadlock has surfaced," she said.

JU's officiating finance officer Debasish Pal, who was present at the protest, said the state government had sanctioned Rs 4 crore on January 4 for a scheme.

"We need the approval of the finance committee and the executive council for the adjustment of university loans and the remaining portion for payments. Such formalities can only be completed following orders from the

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VC. Pension, gratuity and leave encashment files are approved by the VC. All these are stuck now," Pal said.

Parthapratim Roy, secretary of the teachers' association who went to the protest site to show solidarity, said: "Whoever is the officiating VC must come to office and clear the files."

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