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JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY

Jadavpur University impasse: officer flags grant crisis

The situation, an official working in the university's finance wing said, has prompted the acting finance officer to write to the VC that if the impasse continues till March 31, around Rs 46 crore that JU has received from multiple agencies as grants for various departments would remain unutilised and have to be returned

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY | PUBLISHED 30.01.24, 06:05 AM

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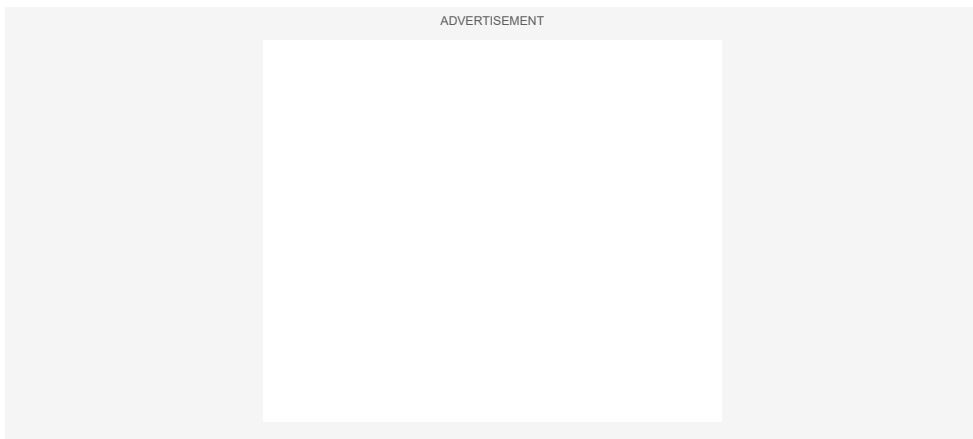
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Jadavpur University
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Jadavpur University is in the middle of a financial crisis as the finance committee is not approving any bill or expenditure proposal, other than those related to campus exigencies, on the ground that the vice-chancellor is not attending office and institution's highest decision-making body is not meeting.

The situation, an official working in the university's finance wing said, has prompted the acting finance officer to write to the VC that if the impasse continues till March 31, around Rs 46 crore that JU has received from multiple agencies as grants for various departments would remain unutilised and have to be returned.



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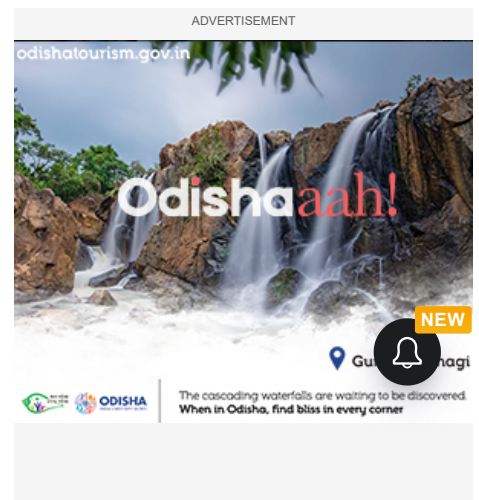
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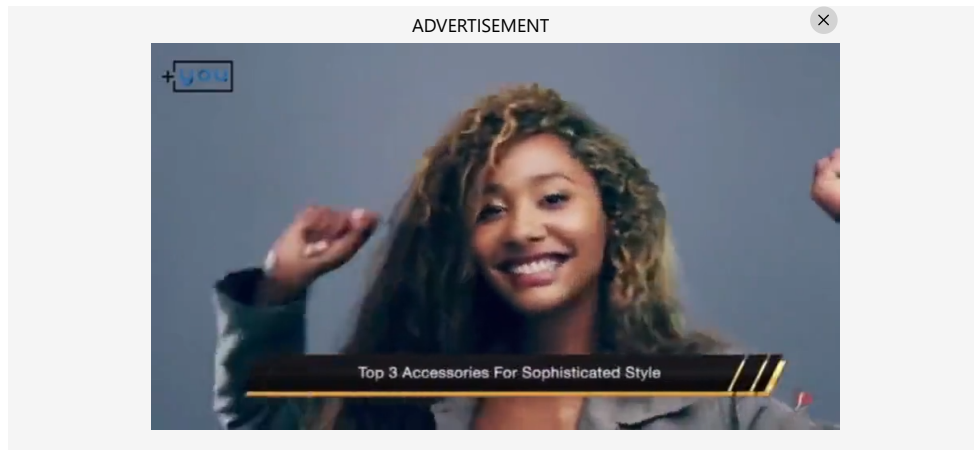
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The acting finance officer, Debasish Pal, has written to the VC: “The entire amount (Rs 46 crore) will either be refunded back to the funding agencies or could not be utilised during the financial year 2023-24.”

The letter, which **Metro** has seen, says: “...immediate actions are necessary for a) regular presence of vice-chancellor, b) convening Project and Development committee meeting, c) permission for convening executive council meeting. Otherwise, significant financial activities of the university will be in a deadlock situation.”



Officiating VC Buddhadeb Sau has not been attending office and signing files over the past month.

Governor C.V. Ananda Bose, who is chancellor of JU, had ordered Sau’s removal on December 23 for deciding to go ahead with the convocation, which was held the next day, ignoring Raj Bhavan’s wish.

But the state government has since twice asked Sau to continue as officiating VC.

But Sau has not been attending office or signing files citing the conflicting orders from the chancellor and the state government and a case pending in the Supreme Court over who has the authority to appoint interim VCs — the governor or the state government.

The JU finance committee met recently and only sanctioned the pending payments for contractual workers citing exigencies.

But the grants for various departments from bodies such as DST (department of science and technology)-FIST (Fund for Improvement of Science and Technology Infrastructure) and UGC-HRDC (Human Resource Development Centre) are lying unutilised as the finance committee is not approving the expenditure.



“These bills are of the substantial amount and the finance committee is not willing to take any decision in the absence of the VC and also because of the fact that the executive council, the highest decision-making body of the university, is not meeting,” the official said.

The vice-chancellor is authorised to convene meetings of the council.

The letter to the VC from the acting finance officer says grants awarded to various departments must be utilised by March 31, 2024. “Otherwise, the fund will be by default refunded to the funding agency,” says the letter.

Manojit Mandal, a member of the executive council, said: “The finance officer is not clearing the bills exceeding Rs 30 lakh citing the absence of VC and the fact that the council is not meeting.”

Finance officer Pal said: “I have apprised the authorities concerned about the prevailing situation.”

VC Sau said: “There are contradictory orders from the state government and the chancellor. I am waiting for an order from the Supreme Court before deciding on my next action.”

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