

Bangalore's B-schools shoo online CAT

Jayalakshmi Venugopal. BANGALORE

The common admission test (CAT) 2009 fiasco has made at least 150 business schools across India see red. Besides the seven Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs), the B-schools too utilise the CAT scores for admitting candidates to their institutions.

However, with the last four days seeing several thousand candidates not being able to take the first online CAT due to computer glitches and virus problems, the B-schools are now questioning the efficacy of this test conducted without a prior trial to ensure that everything went on smoothly.

On Wednesday, tests at two labs at the Garden City College were cancelled because of glitches. Many students were turned away.

Most B-schools pay a fee to the IIMs to utilise CAT scores for admissions. Per student, these institutes pay around Rs200-300.

The cancellations have made a few institutes want to revert back to the paper-pencil format for CAT. "I would suggest that the IIMs go back to the old paper-pencil system. At least till they are better prepared to conduct an online test, I don't see how hosting a test over 10 days is helpful to students. Like the GRE, they should host the test over a period of three months for the benefit of students," said Dr KN Balasubramanya Murthy, principal, PES Institute of Technology.

"Candidates who have to travel back and forth because of cancellations are under stress. This will affect their composure, which in turn will affect their performance," said S Sudeep Kumar, associate professor, chairman-admissions, TA Pai Management Institute.

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LIKE IT OR NOT, ONLINE TESTS WON'T BE DUMPED

The common admission test will be held online again next year despite the technical glitches that marred the exam this time, the Indian Institutes of Management Admissions Committee said on Wednesday. "We're sorry. We are learning from our mistakes and they won't be repeated. But the online CAT is here to stay," said Himanshu Rai, chairman of the admissions committee

Mumbai feels CHEATED

Priya Ramakrishnan. MUMBAI

Touted as one of the toughest entrance tests in the country, the common admission test (CAT) has lost its credibility, say aspirants to the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) who attempted its first online avatar. Reason: wide-spread copying is being reported across Mumbai.

"Throughout the two-and-half-hour long test, the lab-1 was chaotic and full of loud noise. I saw several students purposely rebooting the system so as to gain a few extra minutes to solve questions. Invigilators were busy fixing problems of other candidates who were also grappling with their systems," says Amit Bushan, who attempted the test from Fr Conceicao Rodrigues Agnel College of Engineering, Bandra.

Another candidate, who attempted the test from Saboo Siddik College of Engineering, Byculla, complained about people consulting with each other while solving problems in the Quant (quantitative) section. "I saw a group of students talking and peeping into each other's computers. They were also discussing problems and solutions, but the invigilator failed to notice it," said the candidate on condition of anonymity.

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**PAY MORE FOR
CET FORMS**

FROM NEXT YEAR, YOU MAY HAVE TO PAY MORE FOR THE COMMON ENTRANCE TEST (CET) application form. The Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) is planning a Rs50-hike, which, it says, will help meet its expenses to conduct the exams. **The present fee:** Rs550 for general candidates and Rs450 for SC/ST and OBC aspirants could go up to Rs600 and Rs500. The plan will be taken up at a KEA board meeting

IIMs should create error-free CAT

Students are required to take the prestigious CAT exam to seek admission to some of the country's best management schools. Lakhs of students prepare for this for almost a year and eagerly await taking the test. But it is an irony that the institutes that produce some of the country's best managers cannot manage to hold an exam without glitches and errors. Why is it that such a sorry state of affairs prevails even in advanced and world renowned management institutes?

—VS Ganeshan, Sanjaynagar