

Online CAT is flawed

Sir, This is with reference to the news item "Online CAT crashes." I can say it was a glaring effort to give the contract to the American firm Prometric. Our system is not accustomed to conducting this type of examination. And the online exam falls under defective exam category to judge a student's merit.

An exam should not be too much dependent on Internet and computer. God has given us brain which is a super computer. Our conscience should not be converted into a machine. Let CAT be conducted like all other exams on traditional basis. All IIMs should take note of this suggestion.

Ramdas Ray, Bhubaneswar

Paper-based CAT better

Sir, The IIMs are only addressing the problems due to rescheduling of CAT. They are many other problems. The systems of many students hang and they are given another system with the timer continuing from where it left. However, the process takes 15 to 20 minutes which is additional time for those students who work out / recheck 3 or 4 questions in this period. For some people this has happened two or three times. This is an unfair advantage to them. They will not complain because they will fare better.

Many students could not do their best for the following reasons: they had to enter the labs at 8 a.m. for the 10 a.m. slot and were forced to wait till 12.30 p.m to start the exam without any lunch break; there were distractions like other students shouting that their systems had crashed, invigilators talking to each other and mobile phones of invigilators ringing. Many had to close their ears with their hands to concentrate on the exam. A difference of a few marks can change the result. I would request the authorities to scrap this exam and conduct a paper-based test so that everyone will get a level playing field.

S Sriganesh, Chennai

Online CAT to stay, says IIM admissions committee

"We are learning from our mistakes and they won't be repeated," says the chairman of the panel

New Delhi, December 2

"THE highly competitive Common Admission Test (CAT), for entry to the country's top B-schools, will be

held online again next year despite the technical glitches that marred the exam this time," the Indian Institutes of Management (IIMs) admissions committee said here on Wednesday.

Himanshu Rai, a professor at IIM-Lucknow and chairman of the admissions committee, said he was sorry that students had to face a harrowing time owing to technical problems since CAT's staggered 10-day schedule began on Saturday.

"We (the IIMs) can't absolve our-

selves...the CAT is ours. I am extremely apologetic for what has happened so far," Rai said on a news channel. He added that despite mock tests conducted, there were glitches which were not foreseen.

"We are learning (our) lessons and will take cognizance of what candidates are saying. The online CAT is here to stay. I regret the inconvenience caused but we are learning from our mistakes and they won't be repeated," Rai said.

He also called on the rescheduled

candidates facing communication problems to accommodate organisers. "Please try to accommodate us... (for rescheduling problems) please write in once more on the online e-mail ID given or call on helpline. We will try to make the exam as fair as possible. I know students have gotten stressed but from now on things will improve," he added.

As of Monday 45,000 students were scheduled to have taken the online CAT but around 8,000 candidates could not do so at over 40 centres in

various cities including Lucknow, Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore.

On the fifth day of the exam on Wednesday, thousands of IIM aspirants were still uncertain when they would be allowed to take the test. This year over 2,40,000 candidates have registered for the CAT.

The US-based Prometric, the firm administering the test on behalf of the IIMs, has blamed the technical fault on viruses but the students and coaching centres have flayed poor management. *IANS