While Prometric has promised speedy rescheduling for those affected, some want the exam to be cancelled

Damage-control mode

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

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CAT CHAOS

Vivekananda Degree College.

Bangalore: Prometric, which is conducting the Common Admission Test, 2009, on Wednesday said 62% of the candidates affected on Saturday and Sunday have been provided with new appointments to write the test again.
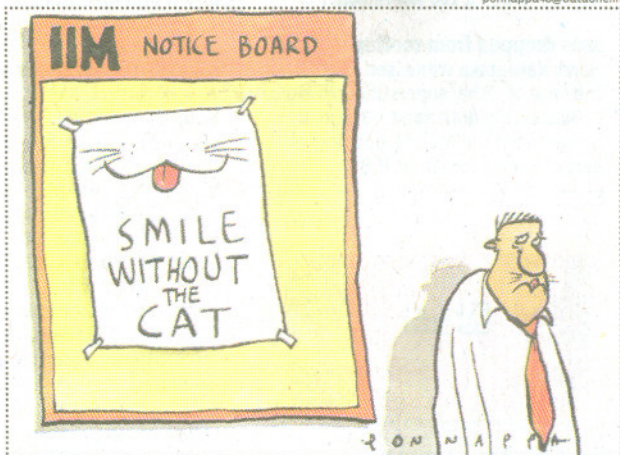
"Prometric will allocate the best available slot for affected candidates within this year's testing period. Every reasonable effort will be made to accommodate any request for change," they said.

A total of 2.41 lakh candidates have registered for CAT 2009, scheduled to run from November 28 to December 7. On the first day, computer viruses and malware prevented 47 testing labs from delivering the test to candidates scheduled there. By the end of Day 3, close to 60,000 candidates had completed their exam.
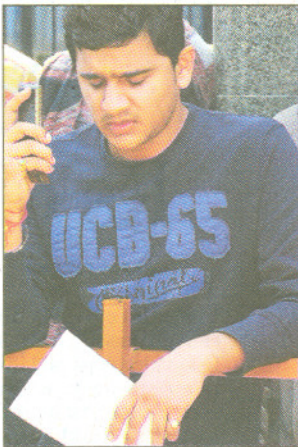
Also, planned closure of impacted labs were scheduled on Sunday and Monday to avoid further inconvenience and allow for necessary repairs. All affected candidates were notified by SMS and email a day before the test. Enhancements have been made for the testing environment, including more advanced virus and malware protection, and configuration changes that protect the integrity of the exam.

STUDENTS CONFUSED

"The software is very confusing. I started the test and did not answer the first two questions. I clicked the review button and ended up pressing the end button with an intention to close the review window. Unfortunately, that resulted in a quit. I feel the paper-pencil format was better. If IIMs are planning to continue with the same pattern next year, they need to do a lot of homework as the software needs immense testing," said Akshaya, who appeared for the exam at

At GCC, students faced difficulties on Wednesday too. Many could not write their test due to problems related to the software. "I reached the centre early and decided to take up a demo test. In between, my system got stuck and I had to log in again. But the computer hanged. Nearly 20 candidates in the second session could not take the test due to some problem or the other," said Sailesh Babu, a software professional.

Many others are still waiting for a reply from Prometric. "I have been calling the helpline since my test was cancelled a second time. But I have not yet received any response," said Amit Manohar, who was to appear for the test on the first day. Abhinav Uttam, a final year student, said: "I have around a week's gap before my semester exams start again."

DEMAND FOR FRESH EXAM

A coaching centre has written to the directors of the Indian Institute of Managements, asking them to revert to the paper-pencil format. P Viswanath, director, TIME, has stated that the computerized CAT should be cancelled for this year and a paper-and-pencil test conducted in its place. "This will do justice to students who had to bear the brunt. After a series of more thorough dry runs, computerized CAT can be reintroduced next year," the letter stated.

"There is a lack of confidence among the test-takers in the current process, making them wonder whether the answers they marked would have been captured properly. This is creating doubts about the test results that are expected to be declared on the January 22, 2010. The fact that some students who have already taken the test have been called by Prometric and asked to take the test again is creating fear in the minds of all students," it stated.