

CAT 2009 valid, says exam panel

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New Delhi, Dec 16: This year's computerised Common Admission Test (CAT) disrupted by technical glitches, would remain valid, the CAT exam committee announced on Wednesday. Chances of return to paper and pencil format for the examination in future also look bleak, even though the committee was not unanimous in the decision, according to sources.

The concerned committee comprises of IIM Ahmedabad director Samir Baruah, IIM Bangalore director Prof Pankaj Chandra and a few other professors met senior officials in the human resource development ministry. "IIMs have decided to continue with computer-based test for 2009. We also look forward to continue the CAT through computer-based testing in future," Baruah said.

The computer-based test has drawn criticism from many quarters as a few thousand students failed to appear in the test owing to the disruptions caused by virus attack and other technical glitches. A fresh test would be held around mid-January for those students

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Samir Baruah, director, IIM Ahmedabad

who could not appear in the test, conducted by American firm Prometric.

IIMs will work out a system to identify all the genuine students who failed to appear in the test during the testing period that continued from November 27 to December 8.

When asked whether the IIMs will review the contract with the American firm, Baruah said the focus of the IIMs is to complete the test in a fair manner. But the entire test would be reviewed to ensure that such problems do not recur in future.

Close to 2.4 lakh students had registered for the test for admission into IIMs and a other B-schools. Of this, 2.16 lakh students have completed the test so far, CAT convenor Prof Satish Deod-

har said. "It is indeed our regret that a number of candidates faced difficulties during this test window and the execution of the exam has not been flawless," he said. About 24,000 students did not appear for the test at the first instance, according to Deodhar. Another 2,000 candidates, who were rescheduled from the first testing window remain to be tested, he said.

There was divergence of views within the IIMs on whether to scrap the computer-based system for this year. Prometric presented detailed data to the IIM directors on Sunday, explaining the nature of problems faced by students. "After analysing the fresh data, we could know the nature and extent of the problem. We are convinced the test has been done in a fair manner," Baruah said.

Based on data, feedback from students, site and audit reports, the CAT committee said the problems faced by the students include complaints of premature exit through the Exit button, slow computers while reviewing and refreshing questions, rebooting of computers and disruptions, missing graphics and data.