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CORPORATE: PAGE 4

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Scheduling Problems Continue To Plague Candidates

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THE Common Admission Test 2009 has been extended by a day till December 8, but problems continue to plague candidates even now in matters of rescheduling of originally postponed exams.

While some students have been assigned outstation centres at short notice, others have been allotted more than one rescheduled date. There are also those whose exams got postponed in the early slots but have not yet received intimation about new dates. Even some of the differently-abled candidates have not been spared, with rescheduled dates being assigned to them at inconvenient locations.

CAT 2009 was originally scheduled to run for 10 days from November 28 to December 7, 2009. "We are working with the IIMs to add an additional session on day 11 to accommodate them within the cities they were originally scheduled," said Ramesh Nava, Prometric's vice-president and general manager for Asia-Pacific, Japan & Africa, in a release.

According to him, in response to feedback from candidates, Prometric has extended the hours for the helpline number, CAT Candidate Care, (1800 103 9293), added more telephone lines and agents to accommodate the high volume of calls.

Prometric's assurances notwithstanding, problems abound. And these arrangements

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don't seem to be doing enough to allay the fears of those candidates who are facing rescheduling problems.

Bhopal resident and CAT first-timer Ashish Jain, who despite one-and-a-half years of preparation at TIME, says he is afraid that he's not going to be able to sit for the CAT at all. "I booked the November 29th first slot which got postponed. I was told that I would be informed about the new date in 48 hours but there was no communication from Prometric's end. It was only after I called the helpline that I received a call as late as Friday afternoon that my test has been rescheduled to Lucknow on December 7. My college exams are on December 8th, how can I make it to Lucknow?" he said. "And I'm just not being able to get through to the helpline."

Jay Kumar, another CAT aspi-

rant from Bhopal is another sufferer. His test was re-scheduled in Guwahati, from Bhopal. Since Mr Kumar got the message at midnight, it was impossible for him to take the exam thousands of kms away, in a different state. Luckily, this 20-year-old engineering student spoke with Prometric and found a vacant seat in one of the institutes in Bhopal itself. "They (Prometric) should understand that its nearly impossible for someone to reach from one state to another over a short notice of few hours. There were no trains readily available and everybody can not travel by air. It's not a feasible option," he says.

Avantika, 22, who is a graduate in BA marketing management and retail business from College of Vocational Studies, Delhi, too, had to go through the nightmare of a re-scheduled exam in a different city. Ms Avantika was supposed to sit for the exam on December 2 at Okhla (Delhi). But the test was cancelled due to technical problems and her exam was re-scheduled to December 4 at Ghaziabad. Ms Avantika is a differently-abled candidate and had to go through the agony of visiting an unfamiliar location, far off from her place. "When Prometric sent me the message that my test will be held at Hi Tech Institute, they did not even mention the location (city). We had to figure it out ourselves. Moreover, I was scared to visit an unfamiliar place and had to take help of my family and friends for the same," she says.