

Newspaper Clips

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Mad rush for CAT seats as JMET set to be scrapped

Kiritika Suneja
New Delhi, Sept 8

STUDENTS are rushing to secure their preferred time slots to take the Common Admission Test (CAT) to enter the country's premier business schools as the joint management entrance test (JMET) of the IITs and Mudra Institute of Communications' exams being scrapped and reports of Faculty of Management Studies' entrance exam meeting the same fate doing rounds.

This is corroborated by the fact that almost two-thirds of total capacity for CAT 2011 has already filled up and most of the registrations have happened in the last few days.

This is interesting as still there are 20 more days left for candidates to register for the exam and the company has had to add capacity as seats are filling up fast.

"In order to offer convenience to as many candidates as possible, Prometric has built in the flexibility of adding testing seats where necessary during the registration window. Within the first three weeks of registration, we have added seats in 8 locations as they were filling up fast," said Prometric India's MD Soumitra Roy. Prometric is the US-based testing agency which has been conducting the computer based CAT for the last two years.

The company has added capacity in Bhilai, Dehradun, Cochin,

Kozhikode, Jamshedpur, Guwahati, Vishakhapatnam and Hyderabad of which Bhilai was a new city added this year. Incidentally, most of these towns are near the new Indian Institutes of Management.

"Till date, including the seats allocated for contingency purpose, we have already filled two-thirds of the total capacity. We will continue to monitor and adjust capacity but this will become difficult as we ap-

proach the end of the registration window," Roy added.

CAT 2011 is to be conducted in a span of 20 days from October 22 to November 18 2011 and will have only two sections instead of three. The examination will be 140 minutes and candidates have 70 minutes to answer 30 questions within each section which will have an on-screen countdown timer. Once the time ends for the first section, they will move to the second and will no

longer be able to go back. Moreover, a 15-minute tutorial will be provided before the start of the test. The total duration will be two hours and 35 minutes including the tutorial. CAT 2010 was taken by 2.04 lakh students.

"I would urge candidates to register as early as possible to avoid the last minute rush or disappointment of not getting their preferred dates or location," advised Roy.

Cybercrime costs \$114b a year

N VASUDEVAN

Bangalore

A LATEST Norton study pegs the annual cost of global cybercrime at \$114 billion, based upon a survey conducted in 24 countries among adults in the age group of 18-64. The value of time lost due to cyber-crime experiences was estimated at \$274 billion.

In India, it is estimated that more than 29.9 million people fell victim to cyber-

crime in 2010, suffering \$4 billion in direct financial losses and an additional \$3.6 billion in time spent resolving the crime.

Norton estimates, with 431 million adult victims globally in 2010 and at an annual price of \$388 billion globally, cybercrime costs the world significantly more than the global black market in marijuana, cocaine and heroin combined, which is valued at \$288 billion.

More than two-thirds of

online adults have been a victim of cybercrime in their lifetime. In India, four in five online adults (80 per cent) have been a victim of cybercrime. The report further reveals that there were 42 per cent more mobile vulnerabilities in 2010 compared with 2009 – a sign that cybercriminals are starting to focus their efforts on the mobile space.

Gaurav Kanwal, country sales manager for India and Saarc, consumer business

unit, Symantec, said, "There is a serious disconnect in how people view the threat of cybercrime. Cybercrime is much more prevalent than people realise. Over the past 12 months, three times as many adults surveyed have suffered from online crime versus offline crime, yet less than a third of respondents think they are more likely to become a victim of cybercrime."

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EDUCATION MISSION

Developing nations seek India's help to raise literacy

Leaders from Africa and South Asia say India's gains in promoting literacy can be an example for others

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NEW DELHI
Several countries in South Asia and Africa have sought India's help to improve education and literacy levels, particularly among adults.

The requests emerged at a conference attended by 14 countries, including India. Leaders and experts working on education met in New Delhi to celebrate International Literacy Day on Thursday and prepared a road map to promote literacy for "inclusive and sustainable development".

"India has displayed an example and E-9 countries can learn from it. Here, they can share the best practices," said Qian Tang, assistant director-general of education at the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco). "Your achievement will bring change in the world."

E-9 countries include Pakistan, India, Nigeria, Brazil and Mexico. They account for half of the global population, as well as two-thirds of people who lack basic reading and writing skills, according to Unesco.

India has a literacy rate of 74%, a jump of 9.2 percentage points from 2001 and 22 percentage points from 1991. Currently, 15 of its states have achieved a literacy level of 80% or above, one of the UN's millennium development goals of 2015.

The male-female literacy gap has also reduced to 16.7% in 2011 compared with 21.6% a decade ago, according to government statistics.

Expressing her eagerness to share best practices in education and literacy practised in India, President Pratibha Patil said, "even today, in the world, about 774 million adults lack basic literacy skills, two-thirds of whom are women."

Patil said improving literacy should be both holistic and relevant for development. "Linking literacy with broader skills, such as technical and vocational skills is important," she said, adding female literacy focus will push socioeconomic development of nations.

Leaders from other nations said India's gains in promoting literacy can be an example for other nations.

"India is a leader and we can learn how they have achieved

the scale," said Allah Bakhsh Malik, secretary, department of literacy and non-formal education in Pakistan's Punjab state. Malik was one of the Unesco awardees of 2011 for promoting literacy.

Mostafa Ragab, chairman of the Egypt's Adult Education Authority said that post the January revolution, the country wants to emphasise on education. "Our literacy rate is 27% and we have come to India to learn how they have structured their system to achieve the high literacy level."

He said after the ouster of president Hosni Mubarak, the country is looking to build its education infrastructure and here India can be a model.

Prime Hazika, director of the national literacy services of Burundi, said more than 40% of the African country's population is illiterate. "We will talk

to authorities to help fund literacy projects in our country. You are talking about ICT (information and communication technology) in promoting adult literacy but it has not reached many people in our country."

Jibrin Paiko, acting executive secretary, national commission for mass education, Nigeria, said it is important to learn from India, its focus on literacy and how the country has structured it.

India has successfully rolled out a special programme to improve literacy among women in 269 districts of the 365 target districts over the past two years.

Even economically backward states such as Bihar have made considerable progress. Overall, Bihar has reached a level of 65%, an increase of nearly 16 percentage points in a decade.

"From giving free cycles to girl students to recruiting women teachers, the state has taken steps and is reaping the dividend," said Anjani Kumar Singh, Bihar's principal secretary, department of human resource development. "We are committing some ₹20,000 crore on education in our state every year."

Singh said that while India is a good case study for the participating nations, it can learn from countries such as Pakistan on how to reach out to minority communities successfully.

Among other things, India will share its Web-based planning and monitoring system, a transparent fund flow and accounting system that it has achieved with cooperation from some state-owned banks and an ICT-based teaching methodology that it has adopted in some of its states.

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Govt to use social media as tool for governance

Abantika Ghosh | TNN

New Delhi: At a time when the social media is said to have spawned revolutions across the world, including our very own Anna Hazare movement, the government looks set to use the medium as a governance tool.

The department of information technology has framed guidelines for social media interaction with government organizations to optimize use of the popular communication tool to connect with citizens.

The guidelines — stressing on issues like professionalism, openness and privacy for government functionaries — have



been uploaded on the ministry's website and stakeholders' feedback is invited within this month.

"From NRIs to civil society activists, social media has become the preferred choice for communication for all kinds of people, including those who misuse it. Yet in the government, especially due to some past experiences like the Shah-shi Tharoor episode, there are misgivings about its use. Without guidelines people are not very sure about how much to reveal and what to reveal.

Hence, we have developed this framework and put it up for public consultation," says Shankar Aggarwal, additional secretary in the ministry of communications and information technology.

The framework revolves around seven core values. It says that an official while commenting on issues should clearly identify her/himself in professional capacity refrain from making personal comments or others and be open to both positive and negative comments though it may not be essential to respond to all of them.