

CUET to be conducted in 3 shifts: UGC chief

New Delhi, March 15: The Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-UG will be conducted in three shifts in a day this year instead of two and plans for its merger with crucial entrance exams like JEE and NEET will be announced at least two years in advance, according to UGC chairman M. Jagadesh Kumar.

In an interview to PTI, Mr Kumar said the University Grants Commission (UGC) and the National Testing Agency (NTA) are prepared to ensure that the second edition of CUET-UG is glitch free.

"With respect to experience of students last year, I do agree that at few centres there were glitches and this year we are taking care of all issues related to those kind of experiences that the students went through. We will make sure that this time the students have to focus only on exams and not on any possible glitches and how are we doing that.

"We are doing that by identifying the centres well in advance and by looking at the infrastructure that is available including the computers, bandwidth, technical personnel at the centres, so that the second edition is glitch free," he said.

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Keeping in mind the experience of the students, a plan has been chalked out and we are ready to ensure that the candidates just have to worry about the exam and not any glitches," he said.

The second edition of the exam, a common gateway for undergraduate admissions in central universities across the country, is scheduled from May 21 to 31. Mr Kumar said that extra computers and extra centres have been arranged as plan B so that in case there are any glitches, the candidates can be shifted there and the exam for a particular shift will not be cancelled.

"The schedule has been decided in a manner that the academic calendar can be brought back on track from this year," he said.

The UGC chief also announced that in a deviation from the usual pattern, the exam will be conducted in three shifts from this year.

Asked about the proposal to merge CUET with engineering entrance exam JEE and medical entrance exam

NEET, he said, "It is definitely doable. The details are being worked out but whenever the merger happens, announcement will be made at least two years in advance so the students can prepare accordingly."

"NEP 2020 has clearly said the burden should be reduced on student by having single national level entrance examination. We floated the idea to mentally prepare students that NEP has proposed such a thing and there is a possibility in the coming years. We are working internally, how to take this forward. Several stakeholders including the health ministry are being consulted."

The UGC had in March last year announced that undergraduate admissions will be conducted in all central universities through a common entrance test and not on the basis of class 12 marks.

The debut edition of the CUET-UG was conducted in July last year and was marred by glitches, prompting the NTA to cancel the exam at multiple centres.