



भारतीय प्रतिभूति और विनिमय बोर्ड
Securities and Exchange Board of India

प्रेस विज्ञप्ति
PRESS RELEASE

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Caution to Investors against Stock Tips offered through Invitation-only WhatsApp Groups

It has come to the notice of SEBI that certain unregistered persons are offering stock tips and trading calls to investors through invitation-only WhatsApp groups. The operators of these fraudulent groups pose as market experts, mostly using overseas WhatsApp numbers, and share unauthorised buy/ sell calls in the name of free investor education. To make these calls look credible, certain members, acting in concert with the operators, post false claims of profit and praise the 'expert'. This practice, known as astroturfing, creates a false impression of genuine support and induces unsuspecting investors to act on the calls.

When such a fraudulent group is suspended following action by enforcement agencies/ regulatory bodies, its members receive a message, **usually from a new number**, inviting them to join a new group, with a message such as:

“Due to Social Media Platform’s risk control measures, our previous group has been banned. This new group will provide daily recommendations of quality stock information and trading guidance. Please join the group.”

In view of the above, investors are advised to:

- not join invitation-only WhatsApp groups run by unknown persons or by persons claiming to be stock market experts, particularly those operated from overseas numbers, and not act on tips shared in such fraudulent groups;
- not be swayed by messages of praise, profit claims or trade confirmations posted by other members, as these may be planted;
- treat any message claiming that a group has been suspended, closed or banned, and inviting them to join a new group, as a red flag, and exit such groups;
- not open an account on, or transfer money to, any trading platform or app suggested in such groups, not share their holdings or trading account details with such persons; and
- deal only with SEBI registered intermediaries and use only authentic trading apps. The registration status of entities can be verified at <https://www.sebi.gov.in/intermediaries.html> and the trading apps of SEBI registered intermediaries at <https://investor.sebi.gov.in/Investor-support.html>.

SEBI is issuing this Press Release to caution investors against acting on stock tips and trading calls offered through such closed fraudulent WhatsApp groups, and to urge them to remain vigilant while dealing in the securities market.

Mumbai

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