



Cyber Tales by Tenali

- a fortnightly series

Volume No 22

January 2022

Covid-19 Booster Dose Registration Fraud



With the sudden increase in Covid cases due to the new Omicron variant, which spreads rapidly, everyone is now keen on taking a third vaccine or booster shot. But fraudsters are taking advantage of the Omicron scare and have found a new way to make money by tricking people by making false promises to get a Covid booster dose. For conducting this fraud, scammers are mostly targeting senior citizens and other people who are eligible for the dose.

In this edition, I will narrate you how elderly citizens are trapped by the Covid booster dose vaccination pre-registration fraud.

How Ratin's Father got trapped?

One day Ratin's father got a call from the State Health Department.

I am calling from the State Health Department for the registration of Covid-19 booster dose.



Please tell me your Name, Date of birth and date and place of your second dose vaccine.



I was also looking for this. My name is...

All the details are given.

You are now registered. Soon, you will receive an SMS with your slot and venue for vaccination.



There will also be a confirmation link in the message. Please click the link and pay Rs.5/- to confirm the slot.



Ok.. I will do. Thank you for helping me out.

After that, Ratin's father received an SMS from the caller.

New Message From 8639XXXXXX

You are successfully registered for Covid-19 booster dose. Your vaccination date: 31st Jan 2022, Slot: 2-4pm, Venue: XYZ Primary Health Care. Click the link below to confirm your slot:

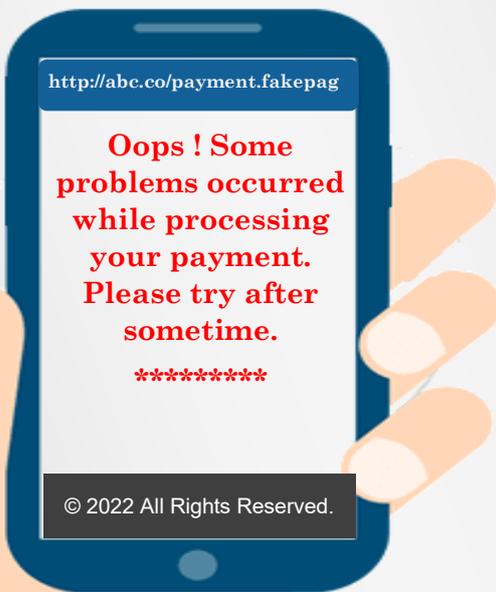
bit.ly/Hg59Xd



Ratin's father immediately clicked the link to confirm the slot.



After entering his card details, he was redirected to another page.



He tried several times but failed to complete the transaction. After sometime, he again got a call.

You have not done the payment for confirming your slot. The link for payment is now deactivated.



I am not much tech familiar. Some error was there. Please help me.



Sir, don't worry. I will try to assist you..... Please check, I have sent a code in your mobile regarding your slot confirmation. Please tell me that.



BV- XYZBNK

570XXX is the OTP for ABC Co. online txn of INR 5555/- on Debit Card ending XXXX. Valid till 5 minutes. Please do not share it with anyone.

Yes yes, It's 570XXX.



Ok.. Let me check once. Your slot is now confirmed Sir. You will receive your token number in few minutes. Thank you.



Call disconnected.

After that Ratin's father received a debit transaction confirmation SMS in his mobile.



Seeing the actual amount of transaction, he was surprised. He immediately tried to reach the caller but found the caller's number switched off. Then he called me and briefed the complete scenario.



O Sir! I can understand your situation. You have been a victim of fraud call. But why did you share the OTP?



I was so confused.. And he said it is a code and not the OTP. What should I do now?



Immediately call the cyber-crime police helpline and also lodge a complaint in National Cyber Crime reporting Portal.



What happened here?



Here fraudster impersonating as Government Official, called random numbers to trap individual in the name of Covid vaccine booster dose pre-registration. Fraudster even shared the date of vaccination to look authentic. Then he requested for a negligible amount and sent a payment link for slot booking confirmation at individual's mobile. After clicking the link, user was redirected to a fake Phishing Website for the online payment and the website captured sensitive financial information and credentials of the user.

After that fraudster used the financial details for initiating online transaction and asked for sharing OTP in the garb of code for confirmation of vaccination slot. This OTP is actually to validate the money transfer from the account. Once it is shared, money is transferred from the bank account.

How to Avoid such Fraud?

- *Do not trust on random calls, messages, emails or links for Covid - 19 Vaccination related information.*
- *Never share any personal or sensitive information like OTP, PIN, Aadhaar No., Debit or Credit Card details with anyone.*
- *Do not click on any external link or download any unknown App for Covid-19 vaccine pre-registration.*
- *Most of the OTP messages mention the reason for generation of the OTP. Read every message carefully before taking any action.*

Covid-19 Booster Dose Registration Fraud continues...



Always refer to government official website
<https://www.cowin.gov.in/to/register/>
for booking slots of Covid-19
Booster Dose vaccination.



Scan this QR Code to Download
& know the whole story



In case you have fallen prey
to any cyber fraud -

DIAL 155260

and

Register your complaint at

<https://cybercrime.gov.in>

Keep Eyes Open



We welcome your valuable
suggestions / feedback at
ciso.office@ucobank.co.in