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DESERTED BOOTHS, IDLE POLLING STAFF, STONE PELTING

SYED YASIR. Dated: 5/1/2014 11:53:41 AM

SRINAGAR/GANDERBAL, Apr 30: Most of the election booths in old Srinagar witnessed a deserted look and on polling booth officials and security force officials were seen present in the booth waiting for voters.

The situation was tense around the polling booth which had been turned into a garrison and where senior police CRPF officials kept monitoring the law and order situation and received inputs about the polling percentage.

“Of 1204 votes, only three were polled until 1 PM in the polling booth located in Khanyar locality of old Srinagar, a polling staff official.

In the nearby Nowhatta polling booth, a senior polling official said, “Only one person cast his vote here so far,” a member of polling staff said at 12 am. A total of 1066 voters were registered there.

The situation was same, almost everywhere in old Srinagar polling booths. “These politicians can’t fool us anym They cannot solve even local issues like repairing a transformer or ensuring quality water supply,” said a local of Nowhatta sitting outside a polling booth.

At Eidgah polling booth, only 15 persons had cast their vote in three hours beginning 7 am. “The total voters reg at this station is 1148,” said an official.

Majority of polling booths in civil lines and old Srinagar wore a deserted look as people preferred to stay indoors engage themselves with internal works.

Unlike the normal practice that sees politicians accompanied by their supporters to the polling booths, the politi in Rainawari were mobbed with a heavy security cover.

At Nawakadal polling booth, there was hardly any activity in and around the booths, with some men and womer election duty having a field day playing with their mobile phones. The Islamia high school polling booth witnesse deserted look. "There are three polling booths in Islamia School. Till 10:30am, only three votes were cast vote. A 2,000 people are registered here," said a polling official.

The officials said they had been discharging their duties in an atmosphere of fear and threat of attacks by civilian "The polling station was pelted with stones last night. We had to be shifted to the nearby police station for some the official said.

Poll officials stationed at Safakadal, an area in the old city, said five polling booths located in the school are intermittently being attacked with stones.

A few kilometers away, voters were coming out after casting votes at a polling station in Greenland School.

"We do not support election boycott. Wasting vote is a sin," said a voter, who did not wish to be named.

The same sentiment was shared by a group of women in Nowpora polling station. "If we get benefits, there is nc reason why we shouldn't vote," said a woman. However, the outskirts of Srinagar city and Ganderbal district witnessed moderate to heavy polling.

In some of the booths of Ganderbal constituency the voting percentage was very low.

In the polling booth at Barsoo, out of 1110 votes, only 50 votes were polled till 1 PM. “We are not interested in tl elections. The political leaders are making tall claims during election time and later they hardly bothered to visit constituencies,” said a voterat Barsoo in Ganderbal.

In the Saloora area of Ganderbal, the polling station offered a deserted look. Only CRPF and police officials were outside the polling booth and no civil movement was seen in and around the polling booth.

“We are idle since morning here. Only few people have come here and cast their votes and rest have abstained voting,” said a polling official.

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