AITC PRESS RELEASE

14 Districts Across Bengal Have Witnessed Peaceful Elections, Violence Reported In 60 Booths Across Total Of 61,539 Booths, Say Party Leaders Kunal Ghosh, Dr Shashi Panja & Bratya Basu

"COLOSSAL FAILURE ON THE PART OF CENTRAL FORCES FOR HAVING FAILED TO CONTROL VIOLENCE"

"WHY IS A NOMINATED GOVERNOR INFLUENCING PEOPLE'S OPINION FROM A POSITION OF POWER?"

Kolkata, 08.07.2023

- A total of 5.67 crore voters took part in the Panchayat Elections today. **The Opposition and the media are claiming that the entire polling exercise in Bengal has been marred with violence, but the truth is far from that**

- **There are 14 districts in Bengal, where the entire election procedure has been smooth.** Major incidents of violence has occurred in 9 booths, while minor incidents have taken place in 60-odd booths. The total number of booths across the State, meanwhile, stands at 61,539

- **If we look at the percentage of booths where violence have taken place, the number comes to 0.00097%**

- The Opposition parties in Bengal, be it CPIM, BJP, Congress or the ISF, are trying to portray that the entire elections has been full of violence, but **the credit needs to be given to the general public that made sure that the polls take place freely and fairly**

- It was the Opposition parties that had demanded the deployment of central forces, which the State Election Commission agreed to. **The question worth raising today is where were the central forces, and why couldn't they control the violence?**

- In fact, the central forces, including the *jawans* of the Border Security Force, which reports to the Union Home Ministry, have been seen on camera threatening voters and asking them to vote for a specific party. **This is ample proof of the fact that central forces were deployed in Bengal at the behest of their political masters**

- Each and every death is extremely painful; **Trinamool Congress regrets every single death that has taken place in Bengal. In the run up to the Panchayat Elections, a script was prepared to show Bengal in negative light.** This was the plan of the Opposition parties, which Trinamool Congress had condemned even before the poll process began

- **The Opposition parties are marketing violence.** We don't want a single death to take place, but the majority of those who've lost their lives are Trinamool workers

- **Of the total deaths that have taken place during the Panchayat Elections, the majority of them are Trinamool workers. If, indeed, Trinamool was instigating the violence, as the 'biased' media has been alleging, why would they target their own workers?**

- When someone dies from the opposition party, the media pounces on the news, and claims it to be *'goondaism'* from the Trinamool camp. However, the moment someone dies from the Trinamool, the media conveniently blames it on internal conflict

- **Why are the central forces not being blamed for the deaths?** Wasn't the deployment of central forces the main demand of the Opposition? Now that there are central forces across Bengal, why aren't they being blamed for mishandling the entire voting process? Instead, the media is busy blaming the State government

- **The Governor of West Bengal, meanwhile, has fanned the violence.** He has selectively visited victims from the Opposition parties, while the majority of deaths are of Trinamool workers. **Has the court given the Governor the responsibility of managing votes?**

- The Governor is delivering political speeches wherever he is going. **Why is a nominated person influencing people's opinion on election day from a position of power? Yet, the media is not asking him any questions**

- The Leader of Opposition today said that he will stop Bengal's funding from the Centre for various schemes and projects. The same leader, until yesterday, was claiming that no money had been stopped from the Centre for Bengal. **The truth over the issue of fund blockade has come out of the mouth of the scam-tainted LoP**

- **The Opposition has understood that they lack the support of the public, and hence, are making absurd statements. This is a classic case of "grapes being sour"**

- It is unfortunate, but we are forced to say this that **the media, too, is complicit in the violence.** When over 99% of booths in Bengal have witnessed the festival of democracy today, **they are blatantly highlighting sporadic incidents of violence**

- **We accept that some of the media houses might not support us, but the least they can do is support the truth**

- Some Opposition leaders want Article 356 and Article 365 to be applied in Bengal. What about Manipur? **When the entire North Eastern state is burning, why aren't there demands of Article 365 and 356 in Manipur?**

- We have seen how a BJP candidate shamelessly poured water into the ballot box in Dinhata, Cooch Behar, while the central forces, conveniently look the other way. Is this what they call 'fair elections'?

- Proxy voting by CPIM cadres has been seen in full swing in North 24 Parganas' Baduria. **These have been captured live on camera, and shown in media channels. Yet, Trinamool is being blamed for the violence**

- In Nadia, CPIM goons fired at the AITC candidate's husband in Narayanpur-I Gram Panchayat. Crude bombs were hurled at Hasina Sultana's husband and other AITC workers just before the commencement of polls. Yet, they blame the Trinamool for all the violence

- **Three of Trinamool workers have been murdered in Rejinagar, Tufanganj and Khargram, while two have been left wounded from gunshots in Domkol.** The Opposition was busy clamouring for central forces. **Why are they silent on the colossal failure of the central forces, who were deployed to ensure safety of people?**

- It seems that the demand for deployment of central forces now seems like a calculated move to enable BJP's dirty tactics. This level of blatant sabotage is an insult to democracy, which Trinamool condemns at all costs

- The Opposition is claiming that the entire polling has been rigged. They are claiming that 'looting' has taken place. Yet, up until 3 PM, there have been 54% voting. **If we were to believe that vote looting has happened, don't you think that the voting percentage should have been upwards of 90%?**

- It's rather surprising to see Tripura Chief Minister Dr Manik Saha talking about democracy. He has conveniently forgotten that the BJP in Tripura had won over 96% of seats uncontested in the 2018 Panchayat Elections. **As a leader from Tripura, known for its political violence, Dr Saha should be the last person to throw stones**

- The Opposition parties had earlier claimed that Trinamool wouldn't allow the Opposition to file nominations, yet when the nomination process ended, we found that over 1.5 lakh nominations were from the Opposition

- Of the 61,539 booth, the State Election Commission had identified 4,834 booths as sensitive, and sought for extra forces. **The Opposition knew that they were losing the polls, and hence targeted the other booths to create nuisance**

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