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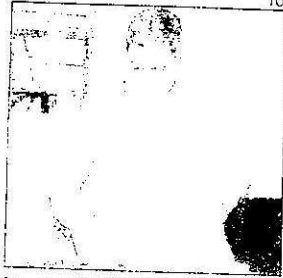
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81% vote in GP polls; result on Wednesday

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Voter turnout in the gram panchayat elections was 81%, a drop from 90% in the 2015 polls, with the second and last phase held on Sunday witnessing a turnout of 80%. The first phase registered 82% vote.

A rather disappointing 81% vote is still significant since elections were held amid the Covid-19 pandemic and fears of a second wave. Votes will be counted on Wednesday. In the 2015 elections, candidates backed by the Congress and JD(S) had won in big numbers, and the BJP settled for a third posi-



Former CM Siddaramaiah casts his vote at Siddaramanahundi near Mysuru on Sunday

tion. The BJP, holding reins this time, hopes to reverse the trend and make strong inroads in rural pockets.

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Polling picked pace by noon
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For the first time, the party micro-managed panchayat elections to ensure victory of the party-supported candidates in a good number of seats.
Except for minor glitches and skirmishes, the voting was peaceful in the second phase. It began on a dull note and picked pace by noon. Polling was held in 2,708 panchayats across 109 taluks in 20,723 booths. More than 1 lakh candidates are in the fray for 89,375 seats. The first phase saw polling in 2,019 gram panchayats across 17 taluks. While 4,877 wards elected representatives unopposed in the first phase, 6,687 candidates sailed past the victory post in the second phase without a contest.