SDPO among 4 injured as NC workers resort to stone pelting, violence

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Police preventing NC workers from closing shops during violent clash at Mendhar on Thursday.

Excelsior Correspondent

MENDHAR, Dec 22: Sub Divisional Police Officer (SDPO) Mendhar, Shahid Nahiem and two media persons were among four people injured when the National Conference workers resorted to stone pelting and violence during forced bandh in Mendhar town today.

Despite strong opposition by the Beopar Mandal, Mendhar and the traders, the National Conference activists tried to forcibly close the shops and other establishments. Some of the party workers had covered their face with cloth and were holding lathis and rods. They went to the main market at around 10 am and asked the shopkeepers to close their shops on the bandh call given by their party.

The Beopar Mandal members and locals said that they will not close down shops as they were not taken into confidence by the party activists and even the local MLA, Javed Rana. As many traders opposed, there was clash between the traders and the NC workers. The Police party led by SHO Dalip Singh arrived there and they tried to control the situation. The NC workers allegedly ransacked several shops and other establishments/ rehris and also beat up the traders. The situation turned ugly.

Later, MLA Mendhar Javed Rana along with his party activists arrived there and asked the traders to close their shops as NC had given bandh call against Government for poor supply of water, power and other amenities.

SDPO Mendhar Shahid Nahiem and Tehsildar also arrived there sensing more trouble as the PDP activists led by senior local leader Wasim Ahmed Khan had also arrived there who also opposed the forcible closure of shops and disruption of vehicular traffic.

While NC workers raised slogans against police and local administration, the traders and PDP workers raised loud slogans against MLA Javed Rana and National Conference. The NC workers blocked the road for sometime.

Then police resorted to mild lathi-charge on the violent NC workers, who resorted to stone pelting on the cops and traders. About eight shops and dhabas were ransacked and public property was damaged during violent protests. The SDPO Shahid Nahiem and Tehsildar rushed ahead to control the situation.

While SDPO was injured as a worker attacked him with lathi, Tehsildar was also manhandled by the violent protesters. Two local media persons Nazim Ali, Nazki Khan and Mohd Laitef, fruit vendor were injured in stoning. Massive damage was caused to Bilal sweet shop, Ikra News Agency, Arfat and Rajput Tea stalls, three Dhabas and two fruit and vegetable establishments by the protesters.

The reinforcement was called from Poonch and the situation was later brought under control. The SDPO had internal injury in the abdomen and was shifted to hospital.

The bandh call of NC nearly turned flop and the people opened their shops and vehicular movement also resumed after police action. Later. the MLA held rally there and addressed the gathering in the main market.

The SDPO, when contacted, said that traders who suffered damages have lodged a written complaint against some identified people including MLA's son. But he maintained that police has registered an open FIR No. 193/ 2016, under Sections 451/ 147/ 148/323/504/506/ 336 and 427 RPC against 30 persons. The traders and cops have also identified some people. The law will take its own course.

He further said the NC workers were forcibly closing the shops in the market and the traders were not coming for the support. They cannot impose their will on the general public and Administration tried to pacify them but they were adamant. Situation turned explosive as both NC and PDP workers besides traders were at the verge of bloody clash. He said the accused involved in causing damage to public property and attack on police and others will be arrested.

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