TEAR-GASSING, LATHI-CHARGE AFTER FRIDAY PRAYERS AT NOWHATTA

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SRINAGAR, Dec 4: Police burst smoke shells and resorted to lathi-charge to disperse violent protest demonstrations after Friday prayers at Nowhatta here today.

Reports said tthat after Friday prayers at Jamia Masjid here, youth held demonstrations. Raising slogans, they also pelted stones on cops. Police swung into action and burst smoke shells and resorted to lathi charge.

The clashes continued for some time and spread to other adjoining areas. Normal life was disrupted in the affected areas with shopkeepers pulling down their shutters and vehicular traffic movement coming to a halt. Reinforcement of police and security forces was rushed to the affected areas to bring the situation under control.

The protest demonstration, followed by stone pelting and subsequent clashes has become a routine at Nowhatta and its adjoining areas after Friday prayers.

Meanwhile, accusing police of ‘unnecessary’ harassment in the name of law and order’ the Jamia Masjid Traders today alleged that police personnel lobbed tear smoke shells inside their shops and ransacked them without any provocation.

Shehar-e-Khas Jamia Market Traders Association President Javid Ahmed Zargar alleged that policemen after lobbing tear smoke shells inside the shops ransacked them. “The shops of Showkat Ahmed Bindroo and Abdul Rasheed Kawa were looted while extensive damage to goods in other shops was caused,” he said, adding that police target shopkeepers after every Friday prayers on the pretext of dispersing stone-pelters. Zargar alleged that police intentionally target shopkeepers.

Zargar said that soon after the incident, Shehar-e-Khas Traders Coordination

Committee (SKTCC) called an important meeting and all the traders community from Srinagar city were requested to observe a complete shutdown in Srinagar tomorrow. “We appeal to traders from Civil Lines as well to observe shutdown against police highhandedness. All the traders will assemble at Jamia Market at 10:30 AM and a peaceful protest will be organized in Nowhatta Chowk,” Zargar told media, adding that Police resorted to intense pepper shelling that blood started oozing out from the mouth of Grand Imam Syed Ahmed Syed who according to Zargar was shifted to SMHS hospital.

Refuting the allegations leveled by traders, a police official said that it has become a routine for some miscreants to disturb peace in the area. “Stone-pelters usually pelt stones on both police and shopkeepers. Miscreants and not peace loving shopkeepers are our target”, he said.

Meanwhile, Kashmir Traders and Manufacturers Federation President Muhammad Sadaq Baqal while supporting the strike call condemned the police action. He said that during every clash in Srinagar City, traders are targeted without any provocation.

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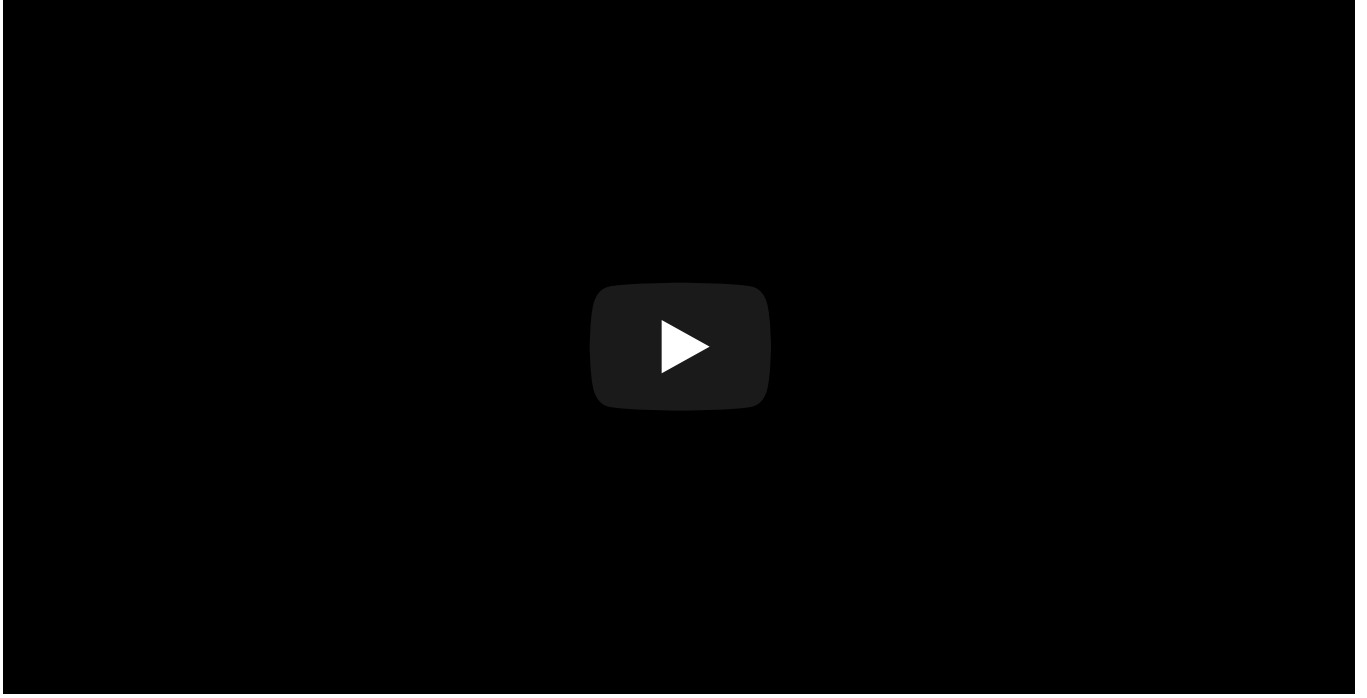

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- Mata Vaishnodevi Shrine Board (http://www.maavaishnodevi.org/)
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