

Orissa villagers clash over Posco plant, one dead

One person died and two were injured after clashes broke out in a village in Orissa's Jagatsinghpur district over the setting up of a steel plant by South Korean Major Posco, police said Saturday.

Violence erupted in Govindpur village late Friday after a face-off between the supporters and critics of the project, a police official said.

The groups were armed with axes and swords and one group hurled country-made bombs at the other, Anil Mishra, in-charge of Kujanga police station, told IANS.

'Three people were injured in the clashes and one of them died in hospital today (Saturday),' he said.

Jagatsinghpur is about 100 km from state capital Bhubaneswar and Govindpur falls under the Kujanga police station.

The region has witnessed a series of clashes since the steel company and the Orissa government signed a deal in June 2005 to build the \$12 billion plant near Paradeep port by 2016.

Those opposed to the project say it will displace over 20,000 people from around 15 villages and ruin their betel leaf farming. Supporters say the plant will bring prosperity and employment.

Posco, the world's fourth largest steel maker, says the plant would affect only 500 families but would create thousands of jobs. In the three years since the deal was signed, there has been little progress on the ground as activists have launched agitations and united villagers against the project.

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