

## Tension in Orissa over arrest of anti-Posco activist

Tension mounted in parts of Orissa's Jagatsinghpur district after the arrest of an anti-Posco activist Sunday, police said.

Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti (PPSS) chairman Abhaya Kumar Sahu was arrested in the evening as there were over 20 criminal cases pending against him, district police chief R.K. Sharma told IANS.

Tension prevailed in parts of the coastal district following the arrest as Sahu's party activists demanded his immediate release.

'We have demanded his immediate release. If he will not be released, administration will be held responsible for its consequences,' said PPSS spokesperson Prasant Paikray.

PPSS is one of the frontal organisations spearheading agitation against the proposed \$12-billion steel plant in the district - the largest foreign direct investment in India by South Korea steel major Posco.

The world's fourth largest steel maker signed a deal with the state government in June 2005 to build the plant by 2016 near Paradeep port in Jagatsinghpur, some 100 km from the state capital.

However, over 20,000 people from around 15 nearby villages have been protesting the project, saying it would take away their homes and livelihoods.

Posco says the plant would affect only 500 families but would create thousands of jobs.

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