

## Security tightened after anti-Posco activist's arrest in Orissa

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Posco Pratirodh Sangram Samiti (PPSS) chairman Abhaya Kumar Sahu was arrested Sunday evening. There were over 20 criminal cases pending against him.

He has been arrested for the first time after more than three years of protests by him and his organisation against the proposed project by South Korean steel major Posco in the region - the largest foreign direct investment in India.

'We have deployed adequate armed policemen in villages in Dhinkia, Nuagan and Gadakujang areas, where Sahu has a large following,' Assistant District Superintendent of Police Kumarmani Meher told IANS by phone.

Sources said as many as 500 policemen have been deployed in the region.

Tension prevailed in parts of the coastal district as Sahu's party activists demanded his immediate release. Hundreds of villagers Monday met at Dhinkia village to chalk out their further course of action.

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

PPSS is one of the frontal organisations spearheading the agitation against the proposed \$12-billion steel plant in the district near the port town of Paradeep, about 100 km from here.

The world's fourth largest steel maker signed a deal with the state government in June 2005 to build the plant by 2016.

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

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

- Indo Asian News Service