

Congress alleges foul play in proposed titanium sponge plant

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Addressing reporters here Saturday, senior Congress legislator V.D. Sateeshan said the project had been conceived by their government during 2001-06 and it was then a Rs.10 billion project.

'But it has come to light that the project cost has risen to Rs.15 billion. The Left government has to come clean on this steep increase. Industries Minister Elamaram Kareem had assured the assembly that the opposition would be taken into confidence before going ahead with the project, but this is yet to happen,' said Sateeshan.

He said when the Congress-led government had held preliminary discussions with Rosoboron but decided to invite an expression of interest from others too.

'We received interest from five companies, but it being an election year, not much progress took place. We are surprised that the Left government has decided to ignore the interest shown by five companies and has instead decided to hand the project to this Russian firm, which is basically an arms dealer,' said Sateeshan.

The Congress decided to raise the issue after the Russian company officials were in Kerala. Discussions for technical clearance are on in New Delhi.

- Indo Asian News Service