

NALCO eyes new smelter tech partner, sticks to 2030 expansion timeline

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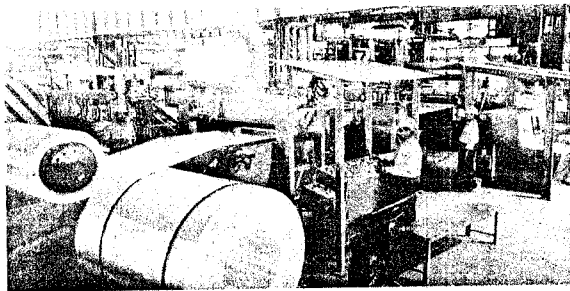
State-owned National Aluminium Company (NALCO) has reset its expansion strategy after talks with Rio Tinto for smelter tech partnership failed to go through.

The company is planning to on-board a second partner, with DPR preparation underway for a brownfield smelter.

Even its 1 mtpa alumina refinery, which has gone through time and cost overrun, is expected to be commissioned in Q1FY27 (May-June 2026).

TECH PARTNER

A company official said, in case of DPR preparation (for the smelter), the technology suppliers' input is required. So by the time, NALCO has finalised the DPR, a techno-



FUTURE PROSPECTS. Land acquisition formalities are at final stages, with expected completion in the next 4 to 6 months

logy partner will be on-boarded. "We have almost finalised things.... and very soon we will be on-boarding the tech supplier," the person in the know said.

NALCO CMD, Brijendra Pratap Singh, during a previous investor call confirmed that talks with Rio Tinto (RTAL Technology) had fallen through, and the state-run aluminium maker was

looking for other options.

But, despite the setback, NALCO is determined to remain on track with its refinery and smelter expansion plans, sticking to the timeline of FY27 and FY30 respectively.

PRODUCTION TO START

"For fifth stream refinery expansion.... we will try to start the production by June. That

is the commitment we have given earlier and we stand by it. Progress in the site is good," Singh said during a recent investor call.

ADDITIONAL DELAYS

Consultancy firm Systematix in a recent report said, the refinery expansion project faces additional delays; "after almost 53 months of overrun and a cost (overrun) of about 38 per cent... alumina refinery is now expected to be commissioned in June 2026, versus its original commissioning date of April 2021," the report said.

The Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the planned 0.5 mt brownfield aluminium smelter is expected to be finalised in the coming 7-8 months.

Land acquisition formalities are at final stages, with expected completion in the next 4 to 6 months.