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## New Chief Secretary of Rajasthan | Rajasthan | 02 Jan 2024

### Why in News?

Recently, **Sudhansh Pant**, an IAS officer of the 1991 batch, **was appointed as the new chief secretary of Rajasthan.**

- It is the **third successive appointment of Sudhansh Pant in a year.**

### Key Points

- He was **brought to the Centre in October 2022 as Officer on Special Duty (OSD)** in the shipping ministry and was later made secretary.
  - After six months, he was shifted to the health ministry as secretary.
- According to Senior bureaucrats, **there is an expectation of reshuffling at the secretary level in the near future.**
- IAS officer D S Mishra **got a six-month extension as Uttar Pradesh Chief secretary.**
- Veera Rana, a 1998 batch IAS officer **is holding additional charge of chief secretary of Madhya Pradesh.**

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## First All-girls Sainik School | Uttar Pradesh | 02 Jan 2024

### Why in News?

On the 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2024, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the '**Samvid Gurukulam Girls Sainik School**' in Vrindavan, Mathura.

### Key Points

- It is the **first all-girls Sainik School**, with a strength of approximately **870 students.**
- It is made under the initiative of establishing **100 new Sainik Schools** in partnership mode with [Non-governmental Organizations \(NGOs\)](#)/Private/State Government Schools in all State/Union Territories.
  - 42 of these schools have already been set up.
- It is described as a ray of hope for girls who aspire to join the Armed Forces.
  - **In 2019**, Rajnath Singh had **approved admission of girl children to Sainik schools** in a phased manner, following the success of the pilot project in **Sainik School Chhingchhip in Mizoram.**
- The **vision of setting up of 100 new Sainik Schools** aims to provide quality education to the students in tune with the [National Education Policy 2020](#) and provide better career opportunities, including joining the Armed Forces.

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## Jal Mahotsav 2023 | Madhya Pradesh | 02 Jan 2024

### Why in News?

The annual Jal Mahotsav 2023 festival took place from **December 2023 to January 2024**, against the captivating backdrop of **Hanuwantiya Tent City** situated on the shores of the **Indira Sagar Dam** in Madhya Pradesh.

### Key Points

- Taking place in Khandwa District, Madhya Pradesh, the Jal Mahotsav is a vibrant **show of the local culture**, with folk performances and traditional rituals celebrating the profound **connection between water and India's rich heritage**.
  - It is a platform for **raising awareness about critical issues** such as water conservation and sustainable practices. It **promotes responsible water usage** and advocates for various environmental initiatives.
- Spanning across 10 acres, this year's Tent City will feature 100 luxurious tents and other amenities such as, a dining hall serving exquisite meals, relaxing sit-out gazebos, and indoor sports room.
  - A bustling food bazaar, **crafts market**, and a rejuvenating wellness centre is being set up. Additionally, **each day will showcase captivating cultural performances**.
- **Regional cuisines** are showcased extensively at the venue, with Local chefs showcasing their expertise and presenting delightful feasts.

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## Lithium-Deal with Argentina | Chhattisgarh | 02 Jan 2024

### Why in News?

The **Ministry of Mines**, Government of India through the **state-owned [Khanij Bidesh India Ltd \(KABIL\)](#)**, has entered into a draft exploration and development agreement with Argentinian miner CAMYEN for possible acquisition and development of **five-odd [lithium blocks](#)**.

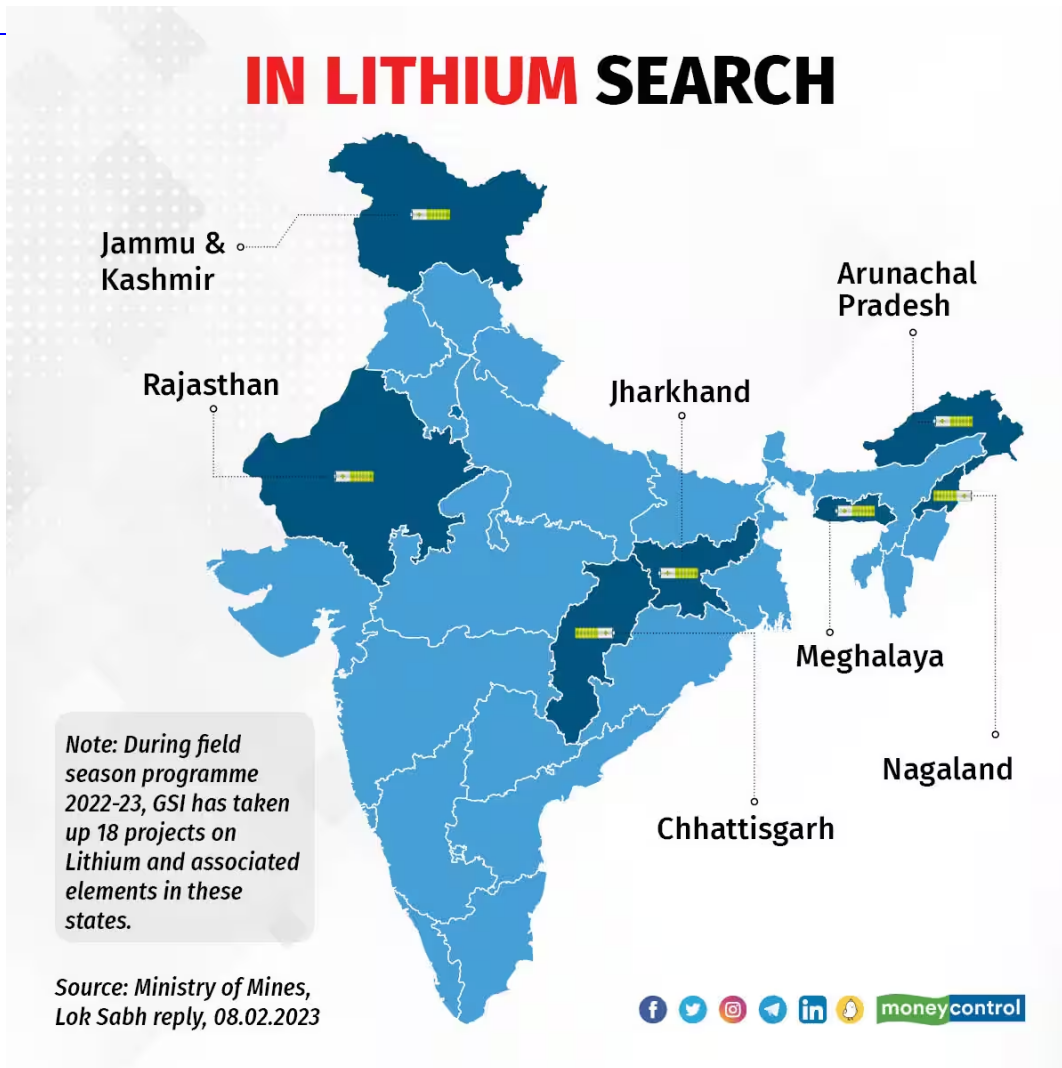
- The company has also entered into a **non-disclosure agreement with Chilean miner ENAMI** for "possible exploration, extraction, processing and commercialisation" of the mineral.

### Key Points

- Lithium is an alkali mineral, also called '**white gold**'. It is soft, silvery-white metal, the lightest metal of the periodic table.
- **Major Properties of lithium include** high reactivity, Low Density and Excellent Electrochemical Properties
- Lithium is found naturally in various minerals, including **spodumene, petalite, and lepidolite** and is extracted from these minerals and refined into lithium metal or its compounds.
  - The top producers of lithium are **Australia, Chile, China, and Argentina**.
- It is a crucial component of **[rechargeable batteries](#)** used in smartphones, laptops, electric vehicles, and other electronics.

- Lithium compounds are used to **strengthen glass and ceramics**, making them more durable and heat-resistant.
- It is used as a **mood stabilizer** in the treatment of [bipolar disorder](#).
- Lithium greases are used in **high-pressure and high-temperature** applications.
- 2023 saw a surge in lithium discoveries:
  - Massive reserves unearthed in **Jammu and Kashmir** (estimated 5.9 million tonnes).
  - **Deposits found in Rajasthan** (potentially meeting 80% of India's demand).
  - Additional reserves identified in **Jharkhand**.
- However, India has put up lithium blocks for auction: **one in J&K and another in Chhattisgarh**, with most of its domestic requirements, across categories like [EVs](#), lithium-ion battery making, and other energy storage solutions, being met completely through imports.

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## Trial Essential to Define 'Religious Character of Place of Worship': Allahabad HC | Uttar Pradesh | 02 Jan 2024

Why in News?

The Allahabad High Court's recent stance in the [Gyanvapi case](#) suggests that the [Places of Worship Act, 1991](#) **does not clarify “religious character of any place of worship”** and can only be determined in a trial, based on documentary and oral evidence, on a case-to-case basis.

## Key Points

- The Places of Worship Act, 1991 **bars the conversion of religious sites into places of worship for a different religion or sect.**
  - It also **mandates preserving the religious identity of any place of worship** as it stood on 15th August, 1947.
- The Gyanvapi case is a **legal battle concerning the ownership and religious identity of Varanasi's Gyanvapi complex**, housing both a mosque and a temple.
  - Hindu plaintiffs **argue that the entire area, including the mosque site, was originally a temple** dedicated to Swayambhu Lord Adi Vishweshwar.
  - They claim that this temple, once on the Gyanvapi plot, was **demolished by Emperor Aurangzeb in 1669.**
- **Neither the government nor the Supreme Court has presented a clear stance on this issue to date.**

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PDF Reference URL: <https://www.drishtiias.com/statepcs/02-01-2024/print>

