



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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