



Mine Auction in Chhattisgarh

Why in News?

The [lithium](#) mine in Chhattisgarh's **Korba district**, which was delayed because of the Lok Sabha elections, is expected to be put up for auction in the coming month of 2024.

Key Points

- In March 2024, the Ministry of Mines had floated a tender for the auction, in which several companies, such as [Coal India \(CIL\)](#) had expressed their interests.
 - According to the officials, the election Code of Conduct, the bids could not be opened and the ministry would soon initiate the process.
- In February 2023, the [Geological Survey of India \(GSI\)](#) discovered lithium in the Katghora tehsil. According to a preliminary report, lithium deposits were spread over 256.12 hectares, including 84.86 hectares of forest area.
 - The geochemical mapping brought out inconsistent values of lithium in seven composite samples in the **Katghora area**. These ranged between 82.606 and 155 parts per million.

Lithium

- **About:**
 - Lithium (Li), sometimes also referred as '**White gold**' due to its high demand for rechargeable batteries, is a soft and silvery-white metal.
- **Extraction:**
 - Lithium can be extracted in different ways, depending on the type of the deposit — generally either through **solar evaporation of large brine pools**, or from **hard-rock extraction of the ore**.
- **Uses:**
 - Lithium is an important component of **electrochemical cells** used in batteries of EVs, Laptops, Mobiles etc.
 - It is also used in **thermonuclear reactions**.
 - **It is used to make alloys** with aluminium and magnesium, improving their strength and making them lighter.
 - **Magnesium-lithium alloy** - for **armour plating**.
 - **Aluminium-lithium alloys** - in **aircraft, bicycle frames and high-speed trains**.
- **Major Global Lithium Reserves:**
 - Chile > Australia > Argentina are top countries with Li reserves.
 - Lithium Triangle: Chile, Argentina, Bolivia.
- **Lithium Reserves in India:**
 - Preliminary survey showed estimated lithium reserves of 14,100 tonnes in a small patch of land surveyed in **Southern Karnataka's Mandya district**.
- **Other Potential Sites:**
 - Mica belts in **Rajasthan, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh**.
 - Pegmatite belts in **Odisha and Chhattisgarh**.
 - **Rann of Kutch** in Gujarat.

Geological Survey of India

- Presently, GSI is an attached office to the **Ministry of Mines**. It was **set up in 1851 primarily to find coal deposits for the Railways**.
- Over the years, it has grown into a **repository of geo-science information** and also has attained the **status of a geo-scientific organisation** of international repute.
- It is headquartered in **Kolkata** and has **six regional offices** located at Lucknow, Jaipur, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Shillong and Kolkata. Every state has a state unit.
- **Central Geological Programming Board (CGPB)** is an important platform of the GSI to facilitate discussion for synergy and to avoid duplication of work.

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