



# GEONESIS

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**Centre in talks with states for  
'pre-embedded' clearance of mines;  
to enact offshore mineral rule**

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# CENTRE IN TALKS WITH STATES FOR 'PRE-EMBEDDED' CLEARANCE OF MINES; TO ENACT OFFSHORE MINERAL RULE

**T**he government is also in the process to enact the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002, the senior ministry official said.

In a bid to provide ease of doing business to mining players, the Centre is in talks with five states for "pre-embedded clearances" of 21 mines, including those of iron ore, coal and lignite, mines secretary Vivek Bharadwaj said on Tuesday.

The government is also in the process to enact the Offshore Areas Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 2002, the senior ministry official said.

The government is in talks with five states, including Odisha, Rajasthan and Gujarat, for pre-embedded clearance of 21 mines, Bharadwaj told PTI in response to a question about steps being taken for early operationalisation of auctioned mines.

The miners will get pre-embedded clearances for various processes included in mining, like approval of the mining plan, forest clearances, environment clearances and other regulatory clearances, he said.

"The move will help in early operationalisation of the mines. It takes 5 years (minimum) to make a mine operational. This will come to one-two months," he said while speaking on the sidelines of a FICCI event in the national capital.

The said blocks bear minerals like iron ore, lignite etc. spread across these states, the official said. Over 5 million tonnes of

lithium reserves, which have been found in Jammu and Kashmir recently, will also be auctioned this year, the secretary said. Earlier while releasing FICCI's 'New Age Energy Minerals' report, the top ministry official said, "Offshore Mining Act was enacted in 2002. Today is 2023 and we were unable to take out a single rock from the sea bed. The reason is litigation (processes). Our government is very decisive and proactive and we are in process of amending the Offshore Act which is into public domain for consultations which are over also.

It would hopefully debated by the Parliament very soon." On the report he said, the study gives the perspective of each mineral and the recommendations provided in it are "very solid". It will help the government to make policy prescription for the sector.

The report provides a detailed overview of geographical and geological data, value chains, end-use sectors, applications, market outlook, and long-term demand for each mineral, along with challenges, opportunities, and key recommendations.

FICCI President Subhrakant Panda called for the development of integrated mining and supply chains to achieve the vision of a self-reliant India, or Atmanirbhar Bharat.

He underscored India's import dependency on these minerals. Panda urged the formulation of a long-term strategy to meet the demand surge in future.

Source: Financial Express

# LITHIUM CARTELISATION, STRATEGIC IMPACT AND INDIAN RESPONSE

*Although the Chilean government has announced that they will respect existing mining concessions and contracts, this nationalization represents a significant change in management of Chilean natural resources. The global mining industry, however, is spooked and in the short-term this move is likely to deter foreign investment.*

## Dr Amit Tripathi

Lithium is a key ingredient in the production of batteries for electric vehicles and other renewable energy storage systems. Some of the world's top Lithium producers are in Latin America. Recently Chile, one of the world's largest producers of lithium, passed a law that allows the state to take over lithium resources and production. This move is intended to promote Chile's sustainable development and reduce its dependence on exporting raw materials. It will increase Chile's control over its domestic natural resources, generate greater revenues for the state, and ensure that lithium production is sustainable and environmentally responsible.

Although the Chilean government has announced that they will respect existing mining concessions and contracts, this nationalization represents a significant change in management of Chilean natural resources. The global mining industry, however, is spooked and in the short term this move is likely to deter foreign investment in Chile's mining dependent economy. It is to be noted that Chile is also a major producer of copper and other base and precious metals and historically it has been applauded for its friendly jurisdiction in exploration and mining industries.

There are additional international ramifications of the move. Resource nationalisation has of late become a policy trend in several jurisdictions. There have been concerns in recent years about the potential for cartelisation of lithium production in Latin America. Lithium is a key component in the production of batteries for electric vehicles, making it a critical resource for the global transition to clean energy. Countries in Latin America that hold the large known reserves of lithium are Chile, Argentina, Bolivia and Mexico. These countries have been working together to create a regional bloc to regulate and control lithium production in the region, which has raised concerns about the potential for OPEC like cartelization of Lithium. The concern is that the regional bloc could lead to an oligopoly where a small group of companies control the supply of lithium and manipulate prices. This could result in higher prices for lithium, which would impact the affordability and accessibility of electric vehicles and other clean energy technologies.

In recent times Chinese companies have been expanding their presence in the Latin American lithium mining sector in recent years, with the aim of securing access to the critical mineral for China's growing electric vehicle industry. Chinese companies, backed by the state power and influence have expanded the scope of investment through partnerships with local companies. China is also investing in vertical integration of Lithium supply chains from exploration to processing and refining in Latin America. With their domination of global supplies from domestic sources and expanding significance in major global supply hubs, Chinese companies dominate the global lithium market. This could impact the availability and affordability of lithium for other countries, including India and the United States.

The Chinese presence in the Latin American lithium mining sector has several implications from an Indian strategic viewpoint. India is a major consumer of lith-

ium and has exponentially growing demand for the mineral as the country moves towards a cleaner energy future. Now and in the near future, no new domestic lithium sources appear to be on horizon in India. The recently announced lithium "discovery" in J&K still requires several years of work before its viability can be proven and the demand appears to be significantly outstripping the domestic supply.

One implication is that the Chinese presence in the Latin American lithium mining sector could increase competition for lithium resources, which could impact the availability and affordability of lithium for Indian companies. This could also impact India's ability to secure a reliable supply of lithium for its domestic market.

Another implication is that the Chinese presence in the Latin American lithium mining sector could increase Chinese influence in the region. This could have geopolitical implications, as China and India are both competing for influence in the region. Increased Chinese influence could also impact India's ability to secure diplomatic support in the region.

To mitigate these implications, India could work towards increasing its engagement with Latin American countries to secure reliable sources of lithium. The Indian government could encourage private sector exploration companies to stake lithium prospects overseas and also consider investing in lithium mining projects in the region to increase its access to lithium resources.

Several unproven lithium prospects exist at many places in the world. These prospects have remained known but undeveloped due to a variety of reasons. The common reasons are:

1. **Exploration challenges:** Proving the economic viability of a deposit requires long and painstaking collection of geological data, conducting geophysical surveys, drilling and testing, all of which are expensive and time-consuming. These works are typically done by small exploration companies that then sell the "proven" area to a mining company.
2. **Infrastructure:** Mineral deposits are mostly found in interior locations. To mine these, significant investment in road, power, communication, water supply etc are required. In countries where the infrastructure is better developed even smaller projects become viable. If the infrastructure development cost is loaded on the project viability the resource must be very large. Typically, large resources are much rarer than smaller resources.
3. **Environmental:** Lithium extraction and purification can have a significant environmental footprint and hence environmental permitting is often a challenge.
4. **Regulatory:** Permitting processes vary from country to country and sometimes from state to state. At several places in the global south the regulatory path from exploration to development can be ambiguous and subjective.
5. **Social:** With the large ecological footprint, lithium development projects can face opposition from local communities and environmental groups. This can delay or prevent development.
6. **Market:** Lithium market is largely volatile. Majority of lithium supplies come from China where significant government controls over prices creates

uncertainties. The Chinese Communist Party has in the past demonstrated its ability and willingness to weaponize its dominant control of mineral resources. Lithium exploration and development is a long and expensive enterprise and the return on investment can take several years to come. Investors are often wary of such long gestation projects where the ultimate future commodity prices are dependent not on the free market but on an opaque governmental or cartel process.

In order to encourage the investment in this industry in face of the aforesaid challenges the US government has taken initiative providing research grants for R&D in lithium extraction technologies and battery technologies to improve the

efficiency and reduce the cost of producing lithium-ion batteries; offering tax incentives for companies investing in advanced battery technologies; exploring in sources of lithium from domestic or regional sources, and partnering with industry to de-risk the lithium development process. It would be useful for the Indian government too to take a leaf out of the US playbook and partner with Indian companies and Indian Diaspora in the Indian Ocean Region to secure the supplies to gain strategic resource autonomy.



**About Author:**

The author is Director, MPXG Exploration. The author has spent several years exploring for minerals in the Indian ocean region and has over two decades long experience of working in varied policy jurisdiction globally.

Source: Financial Express



# BASELESS, SAYS GSI ON CLAIMS OF LITHIUM FIND IN RAJASTHAN

**E**arlier in the day, Rajasthan’s Cabinet minister for Mines, Pramod Bhaya, had said: “Recently, the survey completed by GSI in Nagaur’s Degana tehsil has made it clear that there is an abundant reserve of lithium, which is more than Jammu and Kashmir.” The Geological Survey of India (GSI) Tuesday said that reports of large lithium reserves being identified in Rajasthan were “baseless”. “Media reports published in various newspapers regarding the finding of large lithium reserves by the Geological Survey of India, in Degana area, Nagaur district, Rajasthan are completely baseless and misleading,” the survey organisation said. “It is to state that no such information was provided by the regional headquarters or the central headquarters of the GSI,” it said. “It is to be informed that the GSI is carrying out exploration for tungsten, lithium and

associated rare metals mineralisation in the Degana area, Nagaur district, Rajasthan, since 2019-20 and the drilling work is still under progress,” it said. “The resources will be established only after completion of the drilling work and finalisation of the report.” Earlier in the day, Rajasthan’s Cabinet minister for Mines, Pramod Bhaya, had said: “Recently, the survey completed by GSI in Nagaur’s Degana tehsil has made it clear that there is an abundant reserve of lithium, which is more than Jammu and Kashmir.” Earlier this year, 5.9 million tonnes of lithium reserves were found in Jammu and Kashmir by the GSI. Lithium is primarily used in rechargeable batteries for mobile phones, laptops and electric vehicles.

Source: Indian Express



# INDIA TO AUCTION LITHIUM RESERVES FOUND IN JAMMU AND KASHMIR BY DECEMBER: MINES SECRETARY

*“We have completed the consultation process with stakeholders on the amendment of the offshore Mining Act,” said Vivek Bharadwaj*

Auction of lithium reserves found in Jammu and Kashmir’s Reasi will be started by December, said Secretary of Ministry of Mines Vivek Bharadwaj.

Speaking at an industry event on May 2, the secretary said the ministry has written to the Jammu and Kashmir administration for the transaction advisor for the lithium auction.

“We have been lucky to discover 5.9 million tonnes of Lithium. We were actually looking for limestones that are available in Jammu and Kashmir. We found limestone, bauxite, and lithium together. There has been renewed interest in exploration in these minerals,” he said.

The Union Government in February this year said that 5.9 million tonnes of lithium reserves had been found for the first time in the country in Jammu and Kashmir.

Lithium is a non-ferrous metal and is one of the key components in EV batteries, among other industries.

“Geological Survey of India (GSI), an attached office of the Ministry of Mines, carried out a G3 stage mineral exploration project during Field Season 2020-21 and 2021-22 in Salal-Haimna areas of Reasi district, Jammu & Kashmir and estimated an inferred resource (G3) of 5.9 million tonnes of lithium ore and the report has been handed over to the Government of Union Territory of J&K,” the Ministry of Mines earlier said.

The Geological Survey of India proposes more exploration activities in Jammu and Kashmir for identifying lithium resources.

## **Importance of energy minerals**

It is time for India to take a decisive step in rare earth minerals exploration, Mr.

Bharadwaj said.

Speaking at the launch of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry’s (FICCI) Report on “New Age Energy Minerals”, Mr. Bharadwaj expressed his enthusiasm for the potential of India’s energy mineral sector.

Mr. Bharadwaj highlighted the importance of energy minerals in the transition towards a net-zero future and cited the example of Ilmenite, a mineral abundant in India. Despite holding 11% of the world’s deposits, India imports a billion dollars worth of titanium dioxide yearly, which the secretary attributed to technological inefficiencies and litigations.

To unlock the sector’s potential, Mr. Bharadwaj emphasised the need to open the sector to private players, encourage domestic exploration, and adopt efficient technologies.

“I think the government, which is very decisive, very proactive, is in the process of amending the Offshore Areas Act that was put in the public domain for consultations. The consultations are now over, and it will be shortly debated by the Parliament,” said Mr. Bharadwaj.

In his speech, Mr. Bharadwaj also drew comparisons between India and other nations like the U.K., Canada, and China to illustrate the significance of critical minerals on the global stage. He mentioned that each country identifies its critical minerals based on its resource endowments, citing the U.K.’s 18 identified minerals and Canada’s 31. He highlighted the importance of developing India’s critical minerals sector, leveraging the country’s vast resources, and modernising policies to create a sustainable and competitive industry.

Source: The Hindu

## NINE YEARS AFTER BAN, COAL MINING TO RESUME IN MEGHALAYA,

**C**hief Minister Conrad K. Sangma said the Centre had approved mining leases for four persons in the State. At an election rally on May 1, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma said the Centre had approved mining leases for four persons, thus paving the way for scientific mining in the State.

An April 24 letter from the Ministry of Coal to the Secretary of Meghalaya's Mining and Geology department said mining leases had been approved for Nehlang Lyngdoh, Maksing Sibren Nongbri, Thomas Nongtdu, and Wenni Diengngan in the Khliehriat, Kalagaw, Byndihati and Nongstoin coal blocks.

"The National People's Party-led government has been working tirelessly to open up mining in our State. We filed a case in 2019 after which the Supreme Court lifted the ban on mining by the National Green Tribunal (NGT)," Mr. Sangma said during his party's rally in the State's Sohiong constituency.

The election to the Sohiong Assembly seat was postponed after the death of the United Democratic Party candidate, H.D.R. Lyngdoh ahead of the February 27 poll.

Six candidates, including the NPP's Samlin Malngiang are in the fray for the election on May 10.

"Our government is now processing the papers for scientific mining to start within 60 days," the Chief Minister said.

Despite the ban on rat-hole coal mining, the fossil fuel has been extracted and transported illegally for years in Meghalaya.

More than a fortnight ago, the High Court of Meghalaya declined to exonerate the State government from complicity in the export of illegally mined coal to the adjoining Bangladesh.

**"Our government is now processing the papers for scientific mining to start within 60 days"**

**Conrad K. Sangma    Meghalaya Chief Minister**

Source: The Hindu

## MINING OF OCEANS TO UNLOCK HUGE OPPORTUNITIES FOR INDIAN INDUSTRIES: MINES SECRETARY

India is looking to mine oceans, which will unlock huge opportunities and new areas of operations for Indian industries, mines secretary Vivek Bharadwaj said.

Speaking at a conference on the sidelines of the silver jubilee edition of the International Engineering & Technology Fair 2023, the mines secretary said that the government is amending the Offshore Areas Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, which is open for comments from the industry.

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He also urged the industry to get into organized recycling to make India the recycling hub of the world.

Talking about the opportunities and possibilities in metals and mining industry, he said that the government has proposed amendments in the MMDR Act to encourage junior miners.

Koushik Chatterjee, chairman, Metal & Metallurgy Expo 2023 and executive director and Group CFO, Tata Steel Ltd said

metals and metallurgy sector is the foundation of India's economic growth and underlined the need to develop a sustainable metals and metallurgy Industry, which is aligned with India's Sustainable Development and Net-Zero goals.

Gajendra Panwar, MD, Danieli India Ltd said that the industry should build modern steel plants capable of delivering premium quality steel to become globally competitive.

Noting that India needs to become carbon neutral, he said that green hydrogen is a great option to bring down greenhouse gases emissions. "But, until it is available and affordable, we must look for other technologies to use natural gases to bring down carbon emissions," he added.

Sunil Duggal, chairman CII National Committee on Mining and Group CEO, Vedanta Ltd said that the enormous potential of the mining and metallurgy sector needs to be unlocked and added that the industry is fully committed to achieve Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to make India Aatmanirbhar in coming years.

Over 400 companies from 19 countries are displaying their latest products and technologies at the IETF. Finland is the focus country at the IETF this year.

**Source: Mint**



# SLEW OF INCENTIVES LIKELY FOR UNDERGROUND COAL MINING

*Open market sale to be allowed, revenue-sharing for abandoned mines*

In an effort to promote environment-friendly underground coal mining, which still accounts for less than 5% of the country's total coal output, the government is considering a slew of proposals including keeping fuel produced from underground mines away from the notified price regime.

Private players are also being incentivised to revive abandoned coal mines of Coal India on a revenue sharing model with land given on a long term lease, with the condition that underground mining technology will be employed by them.

"The entire coal produced from underground mines will be put to auction, so that it gives higher premium for the investors," an official, with knowledge of the matter said. Not only state-run Coal India (CIL), but private coal miners will also be given the incentive.

"Certain abandoned coal mines of CIL have been put on the revenue-share model. The developer does not have to incur initial capex on them as the land is there and the mine is partially developed. The miners can start production with huge savings on capex and time," he said.

Considering the advantages of underground mines for their better grade of coal and lesser impact on environment, the government aims to reduce the share of opencast mining, currently more than 90%, as these require a lot of land and cutting of forests.

The first round of the auction of abandoned mines has been completed and about 10 mines have already been allocated. Coal India will get coal on revenue sharing basis and it can sell the coal through auction in the open market and not

in the notified segment.

The CIL has lined up another set of 10 abandoned mines for offer. With minimum entry and financial barriers, this initiative will help increase the coal output, the official said. Extractable reserves in these mines is around 380 million tonne.

Further, the government has constituted a committee to promote manufacturing of heavy earth moving machineries under the 'Make in India' campaign to fulfil the vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat'. The committee submitted its report last week.

The mining ministry is also in consultation with various stakeholders to ease out the environmental clearances norms, which has been one of the key challenges.

The government aims to minimize the import of thermal coal, of which there is a large reserve in India but needs to be extracted and made available. India is the second largest producer, consumer and importer of coal in the world after China.

The ministry has set a coal production target of one billion tonnes in FY24 and 1.31 billion tonnes in FY25. Coal minister Pralhad Joshi recently said that the country would have surplus domestic supplies and would start exporting coal by FY26.

"Technological intensity and mechanisation is much more in underground coal mining. It is more suited for big players like Rio Tinto and BHP. Despite 100% FDI allowed in coal mining, none of the big players took part in the auctions probably due to the regulatory landscape and the law and order issues. Best way forward can be JVs between technology providers and local partners for managing local issues," Ritabrata Ghosh, vice president and sector head at ICRA Ltd said. Currently, most underground coal mines in India are not profitable, he added.

**Source: Financial Express**



# THRIVING IN CHAOS, THE POWER OF AN ANTIFRAGILE MINDSET”

Everyone's chasing happiness, or in other words in pursuit of happiness. it's absolutely normal as that's what is being sown in the form of seed into the mind of every small child. unfortunately what the child observes and believe's, just like something written in stone is that happiness or joy in life is directly proportional to external factors, material possessions, or right circumstances, or everything going my way. However going against the tide and teaching's, the reality is true happiness is solely dependant on internal factors, and one of the most powerful tool or way to cultivate lasting happiness is by becoming antifragile. inspired by Nassim Taleb's concept, antifragility refers to thriving in the time of adversity, uncertainty and change rather than merely surviving. Adopting an antifragile mindset can make you more adaptable, resilient, and ultimately happier.

An antifragile personality is an individual who not only with stand adversity, uncertainty, and change but also grow stronger and more adaptable due to these challenges.

People with antifragile personalities are happier than others because they possess characteristics that enable them to navigate life's challenges and uncertainties more effectively.

Let us explore the antifragile mindset and their approach to life.

- Welcoming change- the nature of life and the way universe functions is inherently unpredictable and change is inevitable. developing an antifragile mindset makes one more flexible and open to new experiences. welcoming change allows us to have a positive outlook on life and find happiness in any situation like a break up of a relationship, a job loss, health issues and financial liabilities. A best way is to learn from it and grow wiser.

- Self-evolution – antifragile individuals see challenges as opportunities for growth and self-development. Such individuals deeply believe that facing adversity and stepping out of comfort zone is solely responsible for personal growth.

- Cultivating fortitude- understanding life is full of ups and downs, and ability to bounce back from setbacks is crucial for long term happiness.

- Coping with stress- stress is a natural part of human existence just like sun rising everyday in the east. Knowing this antifragile individuals are better equipped to handle stress. they not only adapt but benefit from stressful situations for their growth and wellbeing, thus creating a space for happiness and fulfillment.

- Developing healthy relationships- antifragile individuals understand that strong, supportive relationships are vital for happiness thus making them great friends and partners.

- Understanding dichotomy of control- antifragile individuals know that they can't control everything except their response to life's situations, thus leading to greater happiness and satisfaction.

- Mindful living- antifragile individuals know the importance of living in the present moment, by practicing mindfulness, gratitude, and unconditional acceptance, thus immersing fully in the present moment and not wasting time and energy by frequently travelling to past and future. by thriving in chaos and using the powerful tool of antifragile mindset, one can unlock the key to lasting happiness without least effort and finding joy in every walk of life.

## ABOUT AUTHOR

**Dr. Majo Joseph**

Dr. Majo Joseph is an Ayurveda Consultant, & General Practitioner. He is also a Psychology And Counselling, Wellness Trainer.

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editor@geonesis.in