India Signs Agreement With Argentina For Lithium Exploration

Why In News

- **Khanij Bidesh India Ltd.** (KABIL), a joint venture between **NALCO Ltd., Hindustan Copper Ltd., and Mineral Exploration Company Ltd.** signed an agreement with Argentina-based CAMYEN SE for the first-ever Lithium exploration and mining project.

- The **agreement was signed** in the presence of Governor of Catamarca Lic Raul Jalil, Vice Governor of Catamarca, Eng. Ruben Dusso and Minister of Mines Catamarca, HE Marcelo Murua and Ambassador of India to Argentina HE Dinesh Bhatia.

About Agreement

- The **agreement gives KABIL exclusive rights** to evaluate, prospect and explore and subsequent to discovery of Lithium, exploitation rights for commercial production for five Lithium brine blocks in the Catamarca Province of Argentina.
- **These five blocks**, Cortadera-I, Cortadera-VII, Cortadera-VIII, Cateo-2022-01810132 and Cortadera-VI, will cover an area of 15,703 hectare and will cost ₹200 crore, NALCO said in an exchange filing.

- KABIL is also preparing to **set up a branch office at Catamarca**, Argentina. This is the first-ever lithium exploration and mining project undertaken by a government company in India.

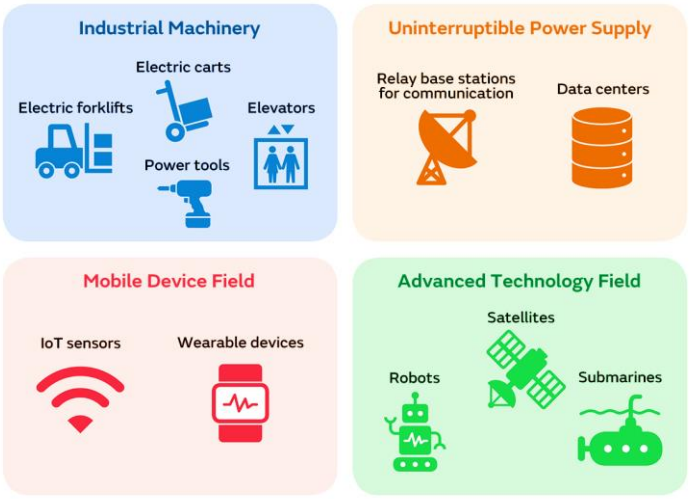
Lithium Exploration

- **Argentina** is part of the **"Lithium Triangle,"** which also includes **Chile and Bolivia** and consist of more than half of the **global Lithium resources.**
- The three countries also also have the **second largest Lithium resources**, third largest Lithium reserves and fourth largest Lithium production in the world respectively.

- **Lithium, often called 'white gold',** forms the cornerstone of the country's transition to green energy options.
- It is used across various categories, including energy storage solutions, batteries for mobile phones, and in EVs.

- **Lithium is used in rechargeable batteries** for mobile phones, laptops, digital cameras, and electric vehicles. It's also used in **some non-rechargeable batteries** for things like heart pacemakers, toys, and clocks.

- Lithium-ion batteries are popular for **electric automobiles**, golf carts, and trolleys because they offer an extended run time, size customization, and fast charging.
- Lithium and its compounds have several **industrial applications**, including heat-resistant glass and ceramics, lithium grease lubricants, and flux additives for iron, steel, and aluminum production.
- Lithium is also **used in ceramics, glass, telecommunication,** and aerospace industries. It's a high energy additive to rocket propellants, and optical modulators for mobile phones
- "This will **not only boost its** quest for **sourcing Lithium for India** but also help in bringing technical and operational expertise for Brine type Lithium exploration, exploitation and extraction.



- **India has been looking for ways** to boost Lithium supplies, a key component used in the manufacturing of batteries for Electric Vehicles.
- The **first Lithium deposits** were found last year in **Jammu & Kashmir**. Bids for 20 critical mineral blocks, including Lithium and Graphite were invited by the government in November last year.