

Battery Metals Market Signals

Bull

- Multiple leading lithium iron phosphate (LFP) enterprises have put forward price-hike demands, driven by rising raw material costs, robust downstream demand, and the industry's response to the “anti-involution” initiative.
- Annual long-term contract negotiations between upstream and downstream battery enterprises are ongoing, with bargaining focused on the pricing coefficient and procurement volume for the upcoming year.
- Jiangsu Lopal Tech. Group Co., Ltd. (Lopal Tech.) will supply a total of 106,800 metric tons of LFP cathode materials—meeting mutually agreed specifications—to Sunwoda Power (Hong Kong) Co., Ltd. from 2026 to 2030.
- In China, lithium carbonate output derived from spodumene remains at a high level, with its share of total production holding steadily at 60%.
- SMM China lithium inventories fell by 2,363 tons to 113,605 tons over the past week.
- In China's energy storage market, delivery schedules for orders have been continuously pushed back due to tight supply of battery materials. Back in October, leading enterprises' energy storage orders were scheduled for Q1 2026; currently, the delivery timeline has been extended to mid-2026.

Battery Metals Market Signals

Bear

- SMM forecasts that China's domestic lithium carbonate output will continue to grow in December, with a MoM increase of approximately 3%. Meanwhile, the pace of inventory drawdown is expected to be slower than in November.
- The market is closely monitoring the resumption of production at CATL's Jianxiawo lepidolite operation, with the earliest potential restart in December.
- The first batch of lithium concentrate from the Bougouni Lithium Mine—owned by Hainan Mining—has been loaded and has officially departed from the Port of San Pedro in Côte d'Ivoire. Totalling 28,950 metric tons, the shipment is expected to arrive at Yangpu Port in Hainan, China, in mid-to-early January 2026.
- Mercuria Energy Trading has established a metals-trading joint venture (JV) with Gécamines SA of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The JV is tasked with marketing copper and cobalt derived from Gécamines' equity interests in local mines. In an interview last Friday, Kostas Bintas, Head of Global Metals and Minerals at Mercuria Energy Group Ltd., stated that beyond substantial cobalt volumes, the JV could ultimately sell over 500,000 metric tons of copper cathode annually.
- NCM/NCA materials have registered moderate output contraction, weighed down by a pullback in overseas market demand.

Others

- As of the week ending Dec. 5, the weekly trading volume of lithium carbonate on the Guangzhou Futures Exchange was 3,768,052 tons, down 31.80% WoW. Open interest was 1,052,293 tons, down 1.73% WoW.
- The registered warehouse warrants of lithium carbonate on the Guangzhou Futures Exchange totaled 10,922 tons last week, compared with 5,441 tons in the previous week.

Sources: SMM, China Passenger Car Association, Bloomberg, MySteel, China Customs, Guangzhou Futures Exchange, FIS, China National Bureau of Statistics, CME.

Weekly Futures Price and Open Interest Change

Open Interest /lots	Cobalt Metal	Lithium Hydro	OI WoW %	Cobalt Metal	Lithium Hydro	Price	Cobalt Metal \$/mt	Lithium Hydro \$/mt	Price WoW %	Cobalt Metal \$/mt	Lithium Hydro \$/mt
Dec-25	763	2,834	Dec-25	-2.6%	-0.2%	Dec-25	53,175	10,310	Dec-25	0.3%	-5.0%
Jan-26	934	2,824	Jan-26	-4.6%	-0.3%	Jan-26	57,100	10,780	Jan-26	-0.2%	-3.1%
Feb-26	960	2,736	Feb-26	4.1%	-1.6%	Feb-26	57,100	10,800	Feb-26	-0.2%	-3.0%
Mar-26	1,108	2,642	Mar-26	0.6%	-1.6%	Mar-26	57,100	10,800	Mar-26	-0.2%	-3.6%
Apr-26	603	1,419	Apr-26	1.7%	0.9%	Apr-26	58,092	11,300	Apr-26	-0.2%	-2.3%
May-26	604	1,509	May-26	4.1%	0.2%	May-26	58,092	11,310	May-26	-0.2%	-2.2%
Jun-26	671	1,914	Jun-26	2.6%	-0.8%	Jun-26	58,092	11,310	Jun-26	-0.2%	-2.2%
Jul-26	367	1,566	Jul-26	0.0%	-3.3%	Jul-26	58,378	11,700	Jul-26	0.0%	-1.7%
Aug-26	509	1,375	Aug-26	34.3%	0.7%	Aug-26	58,422	11,700	Aug-26	-0.1%	-1.7%
Sep-26	464	1,436	Sep-26	17.5%	1.8%	Sep-26	58,489	11,700	Sep-26	-0.2%	-1.7%
Oct-26	515	1,301	Oct-26	10.5%	0.0%	Oct-26	58,533	11,980	Oct-26	-0.4%	-0.6%
Nov-26	509	1,266	Nov-26	10.7%	-0.4%	Nov-26	58,599	12,050	Nov-26	-0.4%	-0.8%
Dec-26	616	1,266	Dec-26	14.9%	-0.4%	Dec-26	58,643	12,130	Dec-26	-0.4%	-1.8%
Jan-27	416	125	Jan-27	1.2%	0.0%	Jan-27	59,084	12,350	Jan-27	-0.6%	-1.2%
Feb-27	371	148	Feb-27	1.4%	0.0%	Feb-27	59,084	12,450	Feb-27	-0.6%	-1.2%
Mar-27	389	175	Mar-27	1.3%	0.0%	Mar-27	59,084	12,550	Mar-27	-0.6%	-1.2%
Apr-27	348	10	Apr-27	0.0%	0.0%	Apr-27	59,238	12,800	Apr-27	-0.4%	-0.8%
May-27	348	10	May-27	0.0%	0.0%	May-27	59,282	12,850	May-27	-0.4%	-1.2%
Jun-27	263	10	Jun-27	0.0%	0.0%	Jun-27	59,348	12,900	Jun-27	-0.4%	-1.5%
Jul-27	259	115	Jul-27	0.0%	0.0%	Jul-27	59,392	13,200	Jul-27	-0.4%	-0.8%
Aug-27	259	115	Aug-27	0.0%	0.0%	Aug-27	59,392	13,300	Aug-27	-0.5%	-0.7%
Sep-27	313	115	Sep-27	0.0%	0.0%	Sep-27	59,459	13,400	Sep-27	-0.5%	-0.7%

Source: CME

CONTACT

Bryan He
BryanH@freightinvestor.com
m: (+86) 18981835193

Anna Chadwick
AnnaC@freightinvestor.com
m: (+44) 2070901126

Lina Liu
LinaL@freightinvestor.com
m: (+86) 15000131292

Luke Vint
LukeV@freightinvestor.com
m: (+44) 7749701512

Harri Bohorun
HarriB@freightinvestor.com
m: (+44) 7543223446