

Battery Metals Market Signals

Bull

- LFP output at downstream cell manufacturers continued to rise, supporting need-based procurement of lithium carbonate, with total inventories continuing to destock.
- Benchmark Mineral Intelligence forecasts that lithium demand will more than triple between 2026 and 2050, with the vast majority of growth driven by the battery market. Batteries accounted for 92% of lithium demand in 2026, up from about 70% in 2020. EVs currently account for 55% of lithium demand and are expected to rise to 76% by 2050.
- According to InfoLink data, global lithium battery energy storage shipments rose 86% YoY in January–August 2026, with energy security and the AIDC boom further accelerating the trend. CATL has secured multiple European customers for its TENER sodium-ion energy storage systems, accelerating the large-scale adoption of sodium-ion storage technology in the European market.
- The Bulgarian government announced the official groundbreaking of the Tvarditsa energy storage project. The project is one of three storage stations being developed by Tesla in partnership with a local Bulgarian company. Each station has a storage capacity of 300MWh and is expected to commence operations in Q2 2027. The three stations have a total investment of over €350mn.
- Trina Solar announced that four Blue Ocean 2 commercial and industrial storage cabinets have been officially commissioned at a county-level commercial complex in Fengqiu, Henan. The project has a capacity of 0.5MW/1.044MWh, integrating PV and storage applications.

Bear

- The Yichun Ecology and Environment Bureau issued a public notice proposing approval of the environmental impact report for the Jianxiawo lithium mining project of Yichun Times New Energy Mining Co., Ltd. in Zhenkouli, Yifeng County–Jianxiawo, Fengxin County, Jiangxi Province.
- Chile’s Minister of Economy and Mining, Daniel Mas, said in an interview during LME Week in London that Chile plans to launch tenders for five new lithium projects after the existing five are approved, targeting an increase in annual lithium output from about 300,000 tonnes to 700,000 tonnes within five to ten years.
- China’s lithium battery scrap volumes are gradually rising, with September recycling volumes rebounding MoM.
- Consultancy Aleph Energy reported that Argentina plans to more than double lithium output over the next five years, from about 140,000 tonnes LCE in 2026 to over 350,000 tonnes by 2031. Expansions are advancing at Olaroz, Fénix and Cauchari-Olaroz, while Centenario-Ratones, Mariana, Sal de Oro, 3Q and Sal de Vida are undergoing commissioning and ramp-up.
- China’s port lithium ore inventories rose sharply last week, while traders’ lithium ore inventories accumulated modestly.
- Multiple signals pointing to looser forward supply have emerged, with the market already pricing in a 2027 surplus. Macro sentiment remains cautious, global liquidity is tightening marginally, and high-valuation stocks are under pressure.

Other

- As of the week ending 24 October, weekly trading volume of lithium carbonate on the Guangzhou Futures Exchange was 2,452,689 lots, up 7.08% on the week. Open interest stood at 731,254 lots, up 3.05% on the week.
- Registered warehouse warrants for lithium carbonate on the Guangzhou Futures Exchange stood at 20,801 tonnes last week, compared with 25,640 tonnes the previous week.



Weekly Futures Price and Open Interest Change

Ol / lots	Cobalt Metal	Lithium Hydro	OI WoW %	Cobalt Metal	Lithium Hydro	Price	Cobalt Metal	Lithium Hydro	Price WoW %	Cobalt Metal \$/mt	Lithium Hydro \$/mt
Oct-26	1,266	1,557	Oct-26	0.0%	0.0%	Oct-26	50,949	14,290	Oct-26	-1.3%	-4.1%
Nov-26	1,376	1,636	Nov-26	0.0%	-3.8%	Nov-26	44,754	13,240	Nov-26	-2.3%	-1.0%
Dec-26	1,918	1,521	Dec-26	2.5%	3.0%	Dec-26	41,050	13,130	Dec-26	-10.4%	-2.0%
Jan-27	1,411	1,756	Jan-27	4.7%	1.4%	Jan-27	38,867	13,430	Jan-27	-15.6%	-1.3%
Feb-27	1,380	1,760	Feb-27	4.0%	1.4%	Feb-27	38,801	13,440	Feb-27	-15.2%	-1.2%
Mar-27	1,470	1,937	Mar-27	3.7%	1.3%	Mar-27	38,801	13,390	Mar-27	-13.1%	-1.5%
Apr-27	723	2,725	Apr-27	-0.7%	17.7%	Apr-27	38,360	13,530	Apr-27	-13.0%	0.9%
May-27	722	2,725	May-27	0.7%	17.7%	May-27	38,074	13,530	May-27	-13.7%	0.9%
Jun-27	663	2,639	Jun-27	-0.7%	18.4%	Jun-27	38,360	13,530	Jun-27	-13.0%	0.9%
Jul-27	328	1,226	Jul-27	0.0%	30.8%	Jul-27	38,427	13,680	Jul-27	-13.3%	0.2%
Aug-27	328	1,066	Aug-27	0.0%	37.2%	Aug-27	38,427	13,700	Aug-27	-13.4%	0.4%
Sep-27	377	1,066	Sep-27	0.0%	37.2%	Sep-27	38,427	13,720	Sep-27	-13.4%	0.5%
Oct-27	339	628	Oct-27	0.0%	13.6%	Oct-27	38,427	13,840	Oct-27	-13.1%	-0.1%
Nov-27	341	578	Nov-27	0.0%	4.5%	Nov-27	38,427	14,050	Nov-27	-13.2%	1.4%
Dec-27	302	578	Dec-27	0.0%	4.5%	Dec-27	38,427	14,050	Dec-27	-12.9%	1.4%
Jan-28	344	181	Jan-28	4.6%	0.0%	Jan-28	38,537	14,400	Jan-28	-13.0%	0.0%
Feb-28	344	181	Feb-28	4.6%	0.0%	Feb-28	38,537	14,500	Feb-28	-13.0%	0.0%

Source: CME

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