

## Before Mining Begins: Can a Water-Scarce Country Afford to Mine Lithium? (A continuation of last week's discussion on Afghanistan's lithium future)

Afghanistan is already running dry. (Refer to Project Dard's archives for discussions on climate shocks in Afghanistan.) Across provinces, wells are sinking deeper, droughts are intensifying, and irrigation networks are collapsing. Now imagine adding industrial mining, a process that consumes massive amounts of water. What we know: 1- No lithium mine has yet opened, but foreign interest is accelerating (though copper mines are already active). 2- Lithium-rich provinces like Daikundi, Nuristan, and Badakhshan already face seasonal water scarcity and poor infrastructure. 3- Global case studies (Chile, Argentina) show how lithium mining can dry wetlands, deplete aquifers, and leave local communities without safe water. This isn't an anti-development message. It's a call for ethical, evidence-based choices. Are Afghans willing to sacrifice their most basic survival resource in exchange for the promise of development?

## Comments

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