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# Significant electrochemical performance improvement of an anion MOF-based solid-state electrolyte across a wide temperature range via an ion exchange strategy

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Low ionic conductivity ( $\sigma$ ) and high activation energy ( $E_a$ ) seriously hinder the development of solid-state electrolytes (SSEs). Herein, a series of post-modified  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-X}$  ( $X = 1, 2$ , and  $3$ ) materials were synthesized via an ion exchange method based on a 3D anionic trinuclear cluster-based metal–organic framework (MOF) (Ni-MOF:  $\{[\text{H}_2\text{N}(\text{CH}_3)_2]_2[\text{Ni}_3(\mu_3\text{-O})(\text{XN})(\text{BDC})_3]\cdot 6\text{DMF}\}_n$ ). Compared with the pristine Ni-MOF,  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-2}$  exhibited significantly enhanced performance as SSEs, featuring a higher  $\sigma$  of  $1.28 \times 10^{-3} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$ , a larger lithium-ion transference number ( $t_{\text{Li}^+}$ ) of 0.76, and a wider electrochemical stability window (ESW) of 5.3 V at room temperature (Ni-MOF:  $2.19 \times 10^{-4} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$ , 0.57, and 5.0 V). Notably,  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-2}$  maintained excellent  $\sigma$  even at  $-40^\circ \text{C}$  ( $2.12 \times 10^{-4} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$ ) and exhibited an ultra-low  $E_a$  (0.08 eV) from 10 to  $100^\circ \text{C}$ , demonstrating potential practical application over a wide temperature range. Moreover,  $\text{LiFePO}_4|\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-2}|\text{Li}$  full cells stably cycled for 150 cycles at 0.1 C with a capacity retention of 81.30%. This work has enriched the types of MOF-based SSEs, providing the possibility for the application of lithium-ion SSEs in a wide temperature range.

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## Introduction

Lithium metal batteries (LMBs) have been widely used in various scenarios due to their lowest electrochemical redox potential ( $-3.04 \text{ V}$ ), low mass density ( $0.534 \text{ g cm}^{-3}$ ), and high theoretical capacity density ( $3860 \text{ mAh g}^{-1}$ ).<sup>1–3</sup> Thereinto, electrolyte, as a key member of batteries, has a non-negligible position. Commercial lithium-battery liquid electrolytes (LEs) are gradually being abandoned due to their limitations of easy leakage, flammability and explosive nature.<sup>4,5</sup> In comparison, solid-state electrolytes (SSEs) with high safety and high energy density stand out in practical applications.<sup>6–8</sup> SSEs can be mainly classified into solid inorganic electrolytes (SIEs) and polymer electrolytes (SPEs). For SIEs, although they always own high ionic conductivity ( $\sigma$ ) ( $>0.1 \text{ mS cm}^{-1}$ ), the poor interfacial compatibility with the electrode material and slow charge transfer at the interface will hinder their development.<sup>9,10</sup> On the contrary, SPEs present excellent mechanical properties, certain flexibility and better interfacial wettability than SIEs, resulting in a reduction in the resistance generated by the polarization during the battery charge/discharge cycle.

However, low  $\sigma$  and lithium ion transference number ( $t_{\text{Li}^+}$ ) seriously reduce the comprehensive performance of SPEs.<sup>11,12</sup> Thus, it is particularly important and necessary to develop some effective SSE materials with satisfactory  $\sigma$ , high  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$ , low activation energy ( $E_a$ ) and good interfacial compatibility.

Metal–organic frameworks (MOFs), as a class of porous inorganic–organic hybrid materials, consist of metal ions/clusters and organic ligands,<sup>13–18</sup> which are widely used in the fields of fluorescence recognition,<sup>19</sup> catalysis,<sup>20</sup> supercapacitors,<sup>21</sup> gas adsorption and separation,<sup>22</sup> and electromagnetic wave absorption due to their attractive architecture and unique performance.<sup>23</sup> In particular, they demonstrated significant advantages in the application of lithium-ion SSEs in view of their high specific surface areas, adjustable pore sizes, abundant unsaturated metal active sites and characteristic functional groups.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, pristine MOF materials often fail to simultaneously meet the multifaceted application requirements. Fu *et al.* have evaluated the electrochemical performances of a ZIF-8 material, demonstrating a  $\sigma$  value of  $4.89 \times 10^{-4} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$  and  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$  of 0.66.<sup>25</sup> The  $\sigma$  and  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$  of HKUST-1 SSE have been measured by Liu *et al.*, showing values of  $4.10 \times 10^{-4} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$  and 0.40, respectively.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, UiO-66 exhibited a low  $\sigma$  value of  $3.20 \times 10^{-4} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$ , low  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$  of 0.48, and high activation energy ( $E_a$ ) of 0.43 eV.<sup>27</sup> Up to now, a variety of functional modification strategies have been employed to

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obtain efficient MOF-based composite SSEs and improve the comprehensive electrochemical performance. For example, Li *et al.*<sup>28</sup> prepared MOF-based composites (PVDF-HFP) through the penetration of polymer chains into MOF materials, achieving a large  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$  (0.6) and high  $\sigma$  ( $9.5 \times 10^{-4} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$ ). Zhou *et al.*<sup>29</sup> acquired a PL-MIL-125-Li composite SSE with a  $\sigma$  of  $3.9 \times 10^{-4} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$  and electrochemical stability window (ESW) of 4.9 V by using a two-step post-retouching process of lithium ionic liquid (Li-IL) encapsulation and PVDF-LiTFSI introduction. Bruce Dunn *et al.*<sup>30</sup> employed the method for anion fixation at unsaturated metal sites to promote the migration of lithium ions to improve the electrochemical property ( $1.22 \times 10^{-3} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$  and 0.21 eV). Huang *et al.*<sup>31</sup> constructed a composite by utilizing soft multicationic oligomers to graft onto a rigid anionic MOF, achieving evident improvements for comprehensive performance ( $8.7 \times 10^{-4} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$ , 0.75 and 4.9 V). Although many MOF-based SSEs materials have been reported, the investigations of their electrochemical properties over a wide temperature range, especially at low temperature, are relatively rare. Moreover, a high  $E_a$  value is a key influencing factor for limiting reaction kinetics. Therefore, the controllable construction of efficient SSEs with excellent overall capacity across a wide temperature range is both significant and challenging.

In this contribution, a 3D porous cluster-based anionic MOF (Ni-MOF) with  $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}_2^+$  as a counter cation has been synthesized and characterized as SSE, featuring  $\sigma$  of  $2.19 \times 10^{-4} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$ ,  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$  of 0.57 and ESW of 5.0 V. In order to realize the enhancement of the comprehensive electrochemical performances, a simple and effective cation exchange strategy between  $\text{Li}^+$  and  $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{NH}_2^+$  has been employed to form  $\text{Li}^+@\text{Ni-MOF-X}$  ( $X = 1, 2$  and  $3$ ) SSE candidates. The increase and uniform distribution of the  $\text{Li}^+$  concentration in the cage cavity after ion exchange will effectively optimize the  $\text{Li}^+$  transport path, and significantly improve the  $\text{Li}^+$  transport efficiency by single-ion hopping mechanism.<sup>32</sup> Especially,  $\text{Li}^+@\text{Ni-MOF-2}$  treated by ion exchange for two days exhibits a higher  $\sigma$  ( $1.28 \times 10^{-3} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$ ), larger  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$  (0.76), and wider ESW (5.3 V) than Ni-MOF at room temperature, in addition to an exciting  $\sigma$  of  $2.12 \times 10^{-4} \text{ S cm}^{-1}$  at ultra-low temperature ( $-40^\circ\text{C}$ ). Notably, the low  $E_a$  of 0.08 eV across the temperature range of 10 to  $100^\circ\text{C}$  can be calculated, which is in the forefront of previous related reports. More importantly,  $\text{Li}^+@\text{Ni-MOF-2}$  as SSE can be stabilized in the air for 140 days with basically unchanged electrochemical properties. This work provides an effective means for boosting the performance of SSEs, creating more possibilities for practical applications within a wide temperature range.

## Experimental section

### Materials and methods

All chemicals and solvents used in this work were purchased and used as received without further purification. The reagents included nickel(II) chloride hexahydrate ( $\text{NiCl}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$ , 99.95%), lithium nitrate ( $\text{LiNO}_3$ , 99%), 1,4-benzenedicarboxylic acid

( $\text{H}_2\text{BDC}$ , 99%), 6''-(pyridine-4-yl)-4,2'':4'',4'''-terpyridine (XN), *N,N*-dimethylformamide (DMF,  $\geq 99.5\%$ ), 1 M  $\text{LiPF}_6$  in ethylene carbonate/diethyl carbonate (EC/DEC, 1:1 vol%), anhydrous ethanol (EtOH,  $\geq 99.7\%$ ), isopropyl alcohol (IPA,  $\geq 99.7\%$ ), polyvinylidene fluoride (PVDF, 99%), poly(tetrafluoroethylene) (PTFE, 60%), *N*-methyl-2-pyrrolidone (NMP, 98%), acetylene black (AB),  $\text{LiFePO}_4$ , CR2032 coin cell components, and aluminum foil (Al foil, 99.9%).

### Synthesis of Ni-MOF

The previous synthesis method of Ni-MOF ( $\{[\text{H}_2\text{N}(\text{CH}_3)_2]_2[\text{Ni}_3(\mu_3\text{-O})(\text{XN})(\text{BDC})_3] \cdot 6\text{DMF}\}_n$ ) was referred to for this work, and some adjustments have been made.<sup>33</sup> In this solvent heat reaction, a mixture of  $\text{NiCl}_2 \cdot 6\text{H}_2\text{O}$  (0.20 mmol, 0.0476 g),  $\text{H}_2\text{BDC}$  (0.20 mmol, 0.0332 g), XN (0.08 mmol, 0.0248 g), 8 mL DMF and 100  $\mu\text{L}$   $\text{HNO}_3$  were added into a 23 mL Teflon-lined stainless vessel. The reaction vessel was then heated at  $160^\circ\text{C}$  for 4 days and cooled to room temperature at  $2^\circ\text{C h}^{-1}$  to collect the bright green hexagonal crystals. Subsequently, the product was then washed several times with DMF under sonication conditions. Finally, the sample was obtained through the filtration and drying process.

### Syntheses of $\text{Li}^+@\text{Ni-MOF-X}$ ( $X = 1, 2$ , and $3$ )

250 mg of the Ni-MOF sample was dispersed in 20 mL of a 0.5 M ethanol solution of  $\text{LiNO}_3$  at room temperature. Respectively, the solution was changed three times per day for one, two and three days. Then, the  $\text{Li}^+@\text{Ni-MOF}$  samples that underwent lithium ion exchange treatment for different times were obtained and named as  $\text{Li}^+@\text{Ni-MOF-1}$ ,  $\text{Li}^+@\text{Ni-MOF-2}$ , and  $\text{Li}^+@\text{Ni-MOF-3}$ , respectively. Subsequently, these samples were washed several times with anhydrous ethanol and filtered to dry naturally for 24 h.

### Preparation of SSEs membranes

250 mg of the MOF sample was ground into a fine powder and homogeneously dispersed in the mixture solution of IPA and PTFE (MOF : PTFE = 9 : 1). The mixture was then rolled to form a flexible electrolyte film with a diameter of 16 mm and a thickness of about 300  $\mu\text{m}$ . The membrane was vacuum dried at  $80^\circ\text{C}$  for 12 h to remove excess solvent molecules. Then, the dried electrolyte film was transferred into an argon-filled glove box ( $\text{H}_2\text{O} \leq 0.1 \text{ ppm}$ ,  $\text{O}_2 \leq 0.1 \text{ ppm}$ ) and immersed in 1 M  $\text{LiPF}_6$  solution for 24 h to adsorb a certain amount of  $\text{Li}^+$ . Finally, the electrolyte film was wiped with filter paper to remove excess liquid electrolyte and dried in an argon atmosphere.

### Preparation of the cathode material $\text{LiFePO}_4$ (LFP)

$\text{LiFePO}_4$  (400 mg), AB (50 mg) and PVDF (50 mg) were mixed and ground with NMP (1.5 mL) to obtain the cathode mixture. Then, electrode films with a thickness of about 200  $\mu\text{m}$  were prepared by applying the mixture on aluminium foils and drying at  $120^\circ\text{C}$  for 10 h before cell fabrication. The mass of a single  $\text{LiFePO}_4$  cathode material ranged from 0.0020 to 0.0050 g.

### Morphology and structure characterization

Powder X-ray diffraction (PXRD) data were collected within a  $2\theta$  range of  $5^\circ$  to  $50^\circ$  using a PANalytical B. V. empirical diffractometer with Cu-K $\alpha$  radiation. The scanning rate was  $0.28^\circ$  per second. Fourier transform infrared (FT-IR) spectra were obtained from 4000 to  $400\text{ cm}^{-1}$  using a Bruker VERTEX70. Thermogravimetric analysis (TGA, PerkinElmer–STA 8000) was performed from 30 to  $800^\circ\text{C}$  at a rate of  $20^\circ\text{C min}^{-1}$  under a nitrogen atmosphere. The surface area and total pore volume were studied by the density functional theory (DFT, Quantachrome) method at  $77\text{ K}$  from the nitrogen adsorption branch. The samples were degassed at  $150^\circ\text{C}$  for 12 h before DFT measurements. The morphologies and structures of the MOFs materials were analysed by scanning electron microscopy (SEM, HITACHI S-4800). Determination of the nickel and lithium contents was employed by inductively coupled plasma-optical emission spectroscopy (ICP-OES, Agilent 725).

### Electrochemical measurements

The  $\sigma$  of SSE placed between two stainless steel electrodes in a CR2032 coin cell was tested by alternating-current (AC) impedance spectroscopy. Measurements were performed using a CHI660E electrochemical workstation (Shanghai Chenhua Instrument Co., Ltd) with a frequency range of  $1\text{--}10^5\text{ Hz}$ , an amplitude of  $5\text{ mV}$ , and a temperature range from  $100^\circ\text{C}$  to  $-40^\circ\text{C}$ . The ionic conductivity ( $\sigma$ ,  $\text{S cm}^{-1}$ ) of the solid electrolyte was calculated using the following equation:

$$\sigma = \frac{l}{R_b S} \quad (1)$$

where  $R_b$  represents the body resistance,  $l$  represents the thickness, and  $S$  represents the contact area with the stainless steel.

The  $E_a$  was calculated using the Arrhenius equation as follows:

$$\sigma = Ae^{(-E_a/RT)} \quad (2)$$

where  $A$  and  $T$  are the apparent frequency factor and temperature, respectively.

The Li|SSE|Li symmetric cell was assembled and the  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$  was calculated according to Bruce Vincent's method as follows:

$$t_{\text{Li}^+} = \frac{I_s(\Delta V - I_0 R_0)}{I_0(\Delta V - I_s R_s)} \quad (3)$$

where  $R_0$  and  $R_s$  denote the resistance before and after polarization,  $I_0$  and  $I_s$  denote the initial and steady currents, respectively, and  $\Delta V$  denotes the applied polarisation voltage ( $10\text{ mV}$ ). The ESW of SSE in the asymmetric Li|SSE|Li cell was measured by linear scanning voltammetry (LSV) from  $0\text{ V}$  to  $7\text{ V}$  with a scan rate of  $1\text{ mV s}^{-1}$ , respectively.

To monitor dendrite growth during lithium stripping/plating behavior in batteries, Li|SSE|Li symmetric batteries were tested for constant current charging and discharging at a

current density of  $0.1\text{ mA cm}^{-2}$  at room temperature. The LFP|SSE|Li cell also was assembled with LFP as cathode material, and its charge-discharge capacity and cycling ability further were studied at a current density of  $0.1\text{ C}$  ( $1\text{ C} = 170\text{ mA g}^{-1}$ ) between  $2.5$  and  $4.2\text{ V}$  (LANDMon CT3004A).

## Results and discussion

### Structural description of Ni-MOF

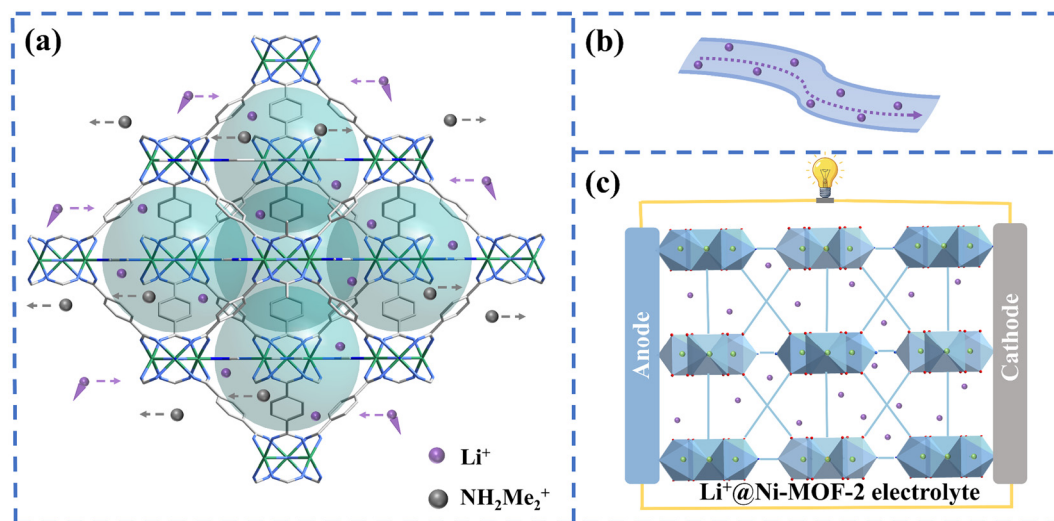
Ni-MOF, named as  $\{[\text{H}_2\text{N}(\text{CH}_3)_2]_2 [\text{Ni}_3(\mu_3\text{-O})(\text{XN})(\text{BDC})_3] \cdot 6\text{DMF}\}_m$ , has been synthesized through a solvothermal method by referring to the literature.<sup>33</sup> The Ni-MOF possesses a unique anion framework with the  $\text{Me}_2\text{NH}_2^+$  cations in the channels to maintain the charge balance of the three-dimensional (3D) anionic framework, providing convenient conditions for further lithium ion exchange. Moreover, this Ni-MOF presents a 3D triangular-bipyramidal cage cavity with a diameter of  $11.8\text{ \AA}$ , which not only can bring a special transmission pathway but also can provide a good jumping space for lithium-ion transport in the SSEs. Based on the structural characteristics of Ni-MOF, the sample was treated with  $0.5\text{ M LiNO}_3$  ethanol solution *via* an ion exchange strategy for 1, 2, and 3 days, and the resulting samples were named as  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-1}$ ,  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-3}$ , respectively.  $\text{Me}_2\text{NH}_2^+$  ions in Ni-MOF have been exchanged by  $\text{Li}^+$ , as schematically shown in Scheme 1.

### ICP, PXRD, SEM, IR, TGA and $\text{N}_2$ Ads./Des. isotherms fundamental characterizations

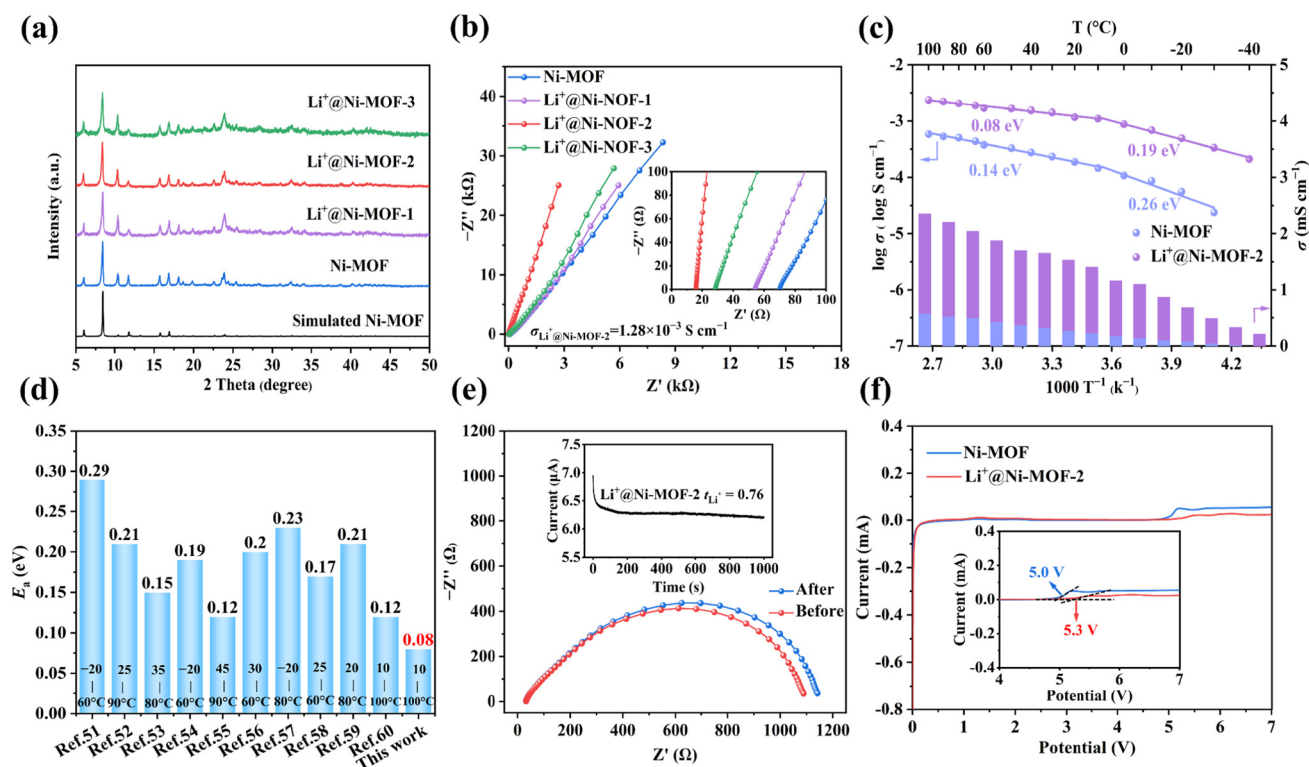
The lithium contents in  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-1}$ ,  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-3}$  were determined by ICP-OES, as shown in Table S1. The experimental results showed that  $\text{Li}^+$  was successfully exchanged with  $\text{Me}_2\text{NH}_2^+$  in Ni-MOF, and the lithium content and molar ratio of Li to Ni increased with increasing exchange time. After two days of ion exchange, the ICP results showed a Li mass ratio of  $0.071\%$  ( $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-1}$ ,  $0.040\%$ ;  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$ ,  $0.133\%$ ) and a Li/Ni molar ratio of  $0.0506$  in  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$ .

PXRD tests have been carried out on the pristine Ni-MOF and the post-modified MOFs samples after the lithium ions exchange treatment for 1, 2 and 3 days. As shown in Fig. 1a, the positions and intensities of the diffraction peaks for experimental patterns were basically the same as that for the simulated ones, indicating that the prepared Ni-MOF possesses high phase purity. The structure of Ni-MOF still can maintain good stability after  $\text{LiNO}_3$  treatment for different times.

In order to investigate the changes in the surface microscopic morphology of the Ni-MOF samples before and after ion exchange treatment by  $\text{LiNO}_3$ , scanning electron microscopy (SEM) was performed. As indicated in Fig. S1, the Ni-MOF and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  samples present an octadeca-hedron morphology with six faces in the upper, lower and middle areas with high structural symmetry. The experimental results above are in good agreement with the previous reports



**Scheme 1** Illustration of the structure (a) and the ion transport mechanism (b) for anionic  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-2}$ . (c) Application diagram of the  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolyte material in full cells.



**Fig. 1** (a) PXRD patterns of the simulated and synthesized samples of  $\text{Ni-MOF}$ ,  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-1}$ ,  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-2}$  and  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-3}$ . (b) Nyquist plots of  $\text{Ni-MOF}$ ,  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-1}$ ,  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-2}$ , and  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-3}$  at room temperature with impedance range from 0 to 18 k $\Omega$  (insert: the partial enlarged detail with impedance range from 0 to 100  $\Omega$ ). (c) Arrhenius plots of  $\text{Ni-MOF}$  and  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-2}$ . (d) Summary of  $E_a$  of different SSEs. (e) EIS before and after polarization of  $\text{Li}|\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-2}|\text{Li}$  cells (the inset is the current–time curve). (f) LSV curves of  $\text{Ni-MOF}$  and  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-2}$  SSEs with potential range from 0 to 7 V (insert: the partial enlarged detail with potential range from 4 to 7 V).

in the literature, demonstrating that  $\text{Ni-MOF}$  has no significant change in macrostructure after  $\text{Li}^+$  exchange treatment with good stability.<sup>33</sup>

Moreover,  $\text{Ni-MOF}$  and  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-2}$  share similar FT-IR absorption peak positions, suggesting that there is no signifi-

cant disruption for the MOF structure before and after  $\text{Li}^+$  exchange (Fig. S2). The absorption peaks in the vicinity of 1737, 1399, and 742  $\text{cm}^{-1}$  can be attributed to the C=O, C=C, and Ni–O stretching vibrations, respectively.<sup>34</sup> Meanwhile, the  $\text{Li}^+@ \text{Ni-MOF-2}$  material showed a characteristic peak of the Li-



O bond at  $501\text{ cm}^{-1}$ , proving the successful exchange of  $\text{Li}^+$ .<sup>35,36</sup>

Notably, considering the safety issues, the good structural stability of MOF materials is of great importance in LMB applications. Hence, the TGA experiment was performed in the temperature range from 30 to  $800\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  under nitrogen atmosphere to evaluate the thermal stability of Ni-MOF. As shown in Fig. S3, weight reductions of 33.49% were observed over the temperature range from 30 to  $310\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ , which may be attributed to the removal of DMF molecules in the MOF samples mentioned above. Then, the MOFs skeletons started to gradually collapse after  $360\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ . Importantly, the  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  SSE material almost can maintain its original morphology during different temperature ranges from 80 to  $200\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  (80, 110, 140, 170, 185 and  $200\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ ) for 1 h (Fig. S4). This reveals the excellent interfacial thermal stability of  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  SSE, providing good stability support for the practical application of lithium ion batteries in the future.

To evaluate the influence of  $\text{Li}^+$  exchange on the channels of the framework, the nitrogen adsorption/desorption isotherms of Ni-MOF and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  have been investigated. As presented in Fig. S5 and Table S2, differences in the pore size, specific surface area and pore volume between Ni-MOF and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  have been observed. DFT specific surface areas increased from the original  $745.6$  to  $1009.8\text{ m}^2\text{ g}^{-1}$ , and the total pore volume increased from the original  $0.318$  to  $0.462\text{ cm}^3\text{ g}^{-1}$ . From the above experimental results, the small-sized  $\text{Li}^+$  ( $0.76\text{ \AA}$ ) replaces the large-sized  $\text{Me}_2\text{NH}_2^+$  ( $6.64\text{ \AA}$ ) to expand the total pore volume, proving the successful exchange of ions.

### Electrochemical performance

The  $\sigma$  values of the four prepared SSEs (Ni-MOF,  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-1}$ ,  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-3}$ ) have been evaluated and calculated by electrochemical impedance spectroscopy method (EIS). At room temperature, the different  $\sigma$  have been obtained for Ni-MOF,  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-1}$ ,  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-3}$  of  $2.19 \times 10^{-4}$ ,  $2.75 \times 10^{-4}$ ,  $1.28 \times 10^{-3}$  and  $4.03 \times 10^{-4}\text{ S cm}^{-1}$ , respectively (Fig. 1b), suggesting that moderate  $\text{Li}^+$  implantation may be better for  $\text{Li}^+$  conduction. As the optimal sample, the  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolyte achieved about an order of magnitude improvement in  $\sigma$  in comparison with that of the original Ni-MOF. Then, the  $\sigma$  were further determined for Ni-MOF and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  over a wide temperature range from  $-40$  to  $100\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ . As shown in Fig. 1c and Table S3, the  $\sigma$  values rise gradually with the temperature increasing from  $-40\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  to  $100\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ . For Ni-MOF, the  $\sigma$  values at  $100\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  and  $-30\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  were  $5.85 \times 10^{-4}$  and  $2.38 \times 10^{-5}\text{ S cm}^{-1}$ , respectively. Then, the Ni-MOF electrolyte was damaged at  $-40\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ . In comparison,  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  exhibits a better electrochemical performance with  $\sigma$  values of  $2.36 \times 10^{-3}\text{ S cm}^{-1}$  at  $100\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  and  $2.12 \times 10^{-4}\text{ S cm}^{-1}$  at  $-40\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$ , realizing the efficient applicability of the solid electrolyte over a wide temperature range. The excellent electrochemical performance of  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  may be attributed to the following three aspects: firstly, abundant  $\text{Li}^+$  in the Ni-MOF framework is a key

factor for obtaining high  $\sigma$ , and the uniform distribution of  $\text{Li}^+$  in the pores is conducive to the stable transport of  $\text{Li}^+$ ;<sup>24</sup> Secondly, according to the single-ion hopping mechanism,  $\text{Li}^+$  jumping on the anion framework may be beneficial to accelerate the ionic transport, further enhancing the electrochemical stability and interfacial contact between the  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolyte and electrode.<sup>32,37</sup> Thirdly, the  $\sigma$  may be limited by the low concentration charge carrier with low  $\text{Li}^+$  content of 0.040% for  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-1}$ .<sup>38</sup> The coulombic repulsion between  $\text{Li}^+$  and other  $\text{Li}^+$  may result in hindered migration at high  $\text{Li}^+$  contents of 0.133% for  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-3}$ . In comparison, the excellent  $\sigma$  of  $1.28 \times 10^{-3}\text{ S cm}^{-1}$  at  $25\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  can be reached with a medium  $\text{Li}^+$  content of 0.071% for  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$ . Hence, a moderate concentration of  $\text{Li}^+$  may be more conducive to the transmission of ions, which is consistent with previous reports.<sup>39</sup>

Unexpectedly, when the  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  was exposed to air for up to 140 days, it still remained stable (named as  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2-140 d}$ ), presenting a high room temperature  $\sigma$  of  $1.01 \times 10^{-3}\text{ S cm}^{-1}$  (Fig. S7 and Table S3). The  $\sigma$  value of  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  SSE is greater than that of SSEs that have been reported at room temperature or low temperature, as shown in Table S4.<sup>40–49</sup> Subsequently, fitting the obtained ionic conductivity-temperature relationship according to the Arrhenius equation yields  $E_a$  of 0.08 eV and 0.14 eV for  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$ , and 0.19 eV and 0.26 eV for the Ni-MOF electrolyte from 10 to  $100\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  and  $-40$  to  $10\text{ }^\circ\text{C}$  (Fig. 1c), respectively.

Actually, the  $\sigma$  of both Ni-MOF and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolytes show obvious differences at high and low temperatures. This may be attributed to EC with a low freezing point precipitating from the solvent as the temperature decreases, resulting in an increase in the electrolyte viscosity and further hindered migration of  $\text{Li}^+$ .<sup>15,50,60</sup> It is worth mentioning that the  $E_a$  of 0.08 eV for the  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolyte is at a high level among the solid electrolytes reported so far. As presented in the detailed comparison (Fig. 1d and Table S5),<sup>51–60</sup> Huang *et al.*<sup>51</sup> embedded an anionic MOF-OH nanocage in a molten crystalline organic electrolyte ( $\text{ML}_{20}$ ). The product MGM-MOF-OH with a continuous negative electrostatic environment and multimodal supramolecular interaction sites was obtained with an  $E_a$  of 0.29 eV. Zhang *et al.*<sup>54</sup> constructed a highly electronegative carboxyl-modified anionic MOF (InOF) that has a relatively low  $E_a$  (0.19 eV). Zheng *et al.*<sup>56</sup> developed SSE based on a three-dimensional interconnected MOF network (3D-PAN/PEO) with optimized pore size and strong cationic sites, presenting an  $E_a$  value of 0.20 eV. Liu *et al.*<sup>60</sup> introduced lauric acid as a moderator to obtain H-MIL-53-NH- $\text{SO}_3\text{Li}$  with a hierarchical pore structure, obtaining a lower level of  $E_a$  (0.12 eV).

The experimental results above show that the effective exchange of  $\text{Li}^+$  into the framework will facilitate an improvement in the electrochemical performance of the  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolyte. Moreover, the  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$  should be investigated as an important parameter to evaluate ions transference in LMB SSEs. Then, the  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$  values of different SSEs were determined by applying a constant polarization voltage of 10 mV to the

assembled Li|SSE|Li cell through the Bruce–Vincent–Evans method. As indicated in Fig. 1e and Fig. S8, the  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$  of Ni-MOF before and after the ion exchange treatment were 0.57 for Ni-MOF and 0.76 for  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$ , respectively. This result indicates that the abundant transport concentration of  $\text{Li}^+$  in the  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  pore channels plays an important role in enhancing  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$ .<sup>61</sup>

In order to evaluate the electrochemical stability of Ni-MOF and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  SSEs, linear scanning voltammetry (LSV) has been employed to explore the ESW of the materials in the range from 0 to 7 V with a scanning rate of  $1 \text{ mV s}^{-1}$ . The results showed that the oxidative decomposition voltage of Ni-MOF is 5.0 V, while that of  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  ESW can be improved to 5.3 V (Fig. 1f), providing good stability support for the long-term stability cycling of the  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolyte. A summary of the electrochemical properties can be viewed in Table 1. In comparison with the mainstream solid electrolytes reported,  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  also exhibits relatively higher  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$  and wider ESW (Table S6).

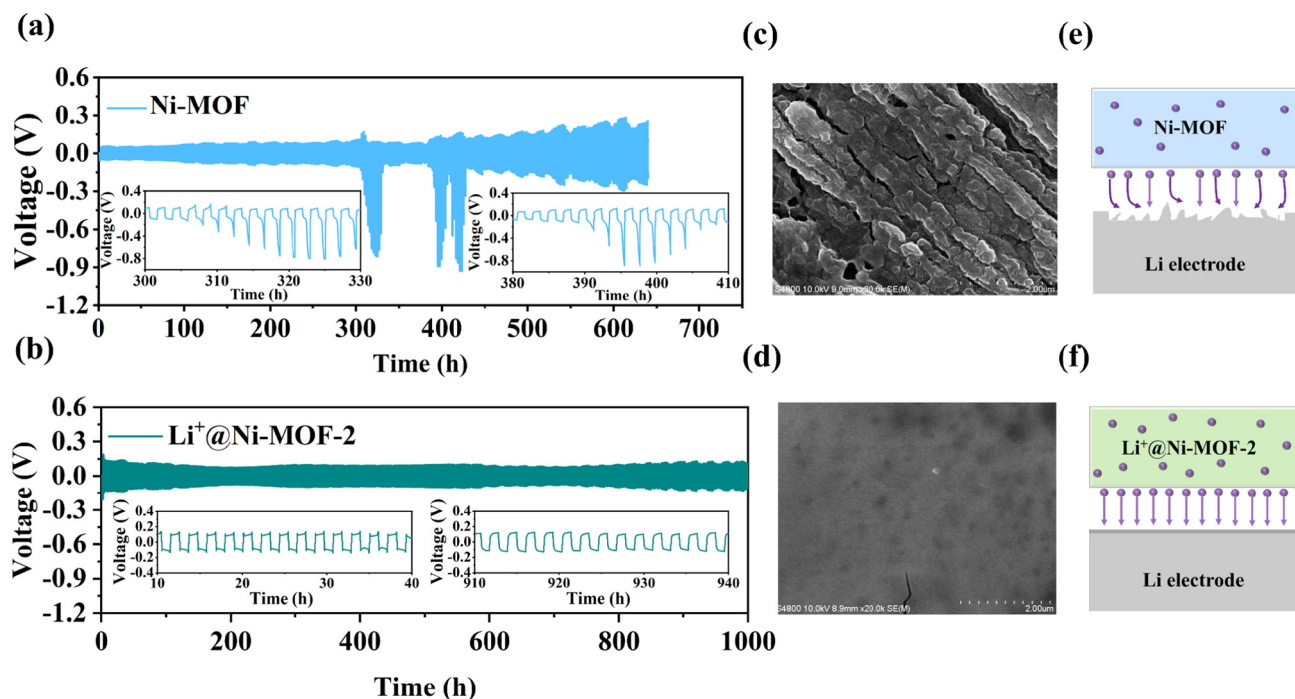
## Cell performance

Li|Ni-MOF|Li and Li| $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$ |Li lithium symmetric batteries were assembled in order to investigate the long-term electrochemical dynamic stability and interfacial compatibility of SSEs with lithium metal. Firstly, constant-current lithium plating/stripping cycle tests were performed at a constant current density of  $0.1 \text{ mA cm}^{-2}$ . As shown in Fig. 2a, a short circuit phenomenon after 300 h of cycling has been observed with the overpotential up to 800 mV due to the rapid growth of lithium dendrites for the Ni-MOF electrolyte in the electrochemical reaction. Then, Ni-MOF shows an increasing trend of overpotential after 450 h. In contrast, the cell with  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolyte possesses an initial overpotential of 140 mV, and it still can work normally with a stable overpotential of around 130 mV after 1000 h of cycling with a relatively smooth polarisation voltage curve (Fig. 2b).

Moreover, the surface morphology of lithium metal in cell after constant-current cycling with Ni-MOF and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$

**Table 1** Summary of  $\sigma$ ,  $E_a$ ,  $t_{\text{Li}^+}$  and ESW of Ni-MOF,  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2-140 d}$

Samples	Ni-MOF	$\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$	$\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2-140 d}$
$\sigma (\text{S cm}^{-1}, 100^\circ\text{C})$	$5.85 \times 10^{-4}$	$2.36 \times 10^{-3}$	$2.57 \times 10^{-3}$
$\sigma (\text{S cm}^{-1}, 25^\circ\text{C})$	$2.19 \times 10^{-4}$	$1.28 \times 10^{-3}$	$1.01 \times 10^{-3}$
$\sigma (\text{S cm}^{-1}, -40^\circ\text{C})$	—	$2.12 \times 10^{-4}$	$2.48 \times 10^{-5}$
$E_a (\text{eV}, 10\text{--}100^\circ\text{C})$	0.14	0.08	—
$t_{\text{Li}^+} (\text{RT})$	0.57	0.76	—
ESW (V, RT)	5.0	5.3	—



**Fig. 2** (a) Voltage profile of the Li|Ni-MOF|Li symmetric cell at a current density of  $0.1 \text{ mA cm}^{-2}$  at room temperature from 0 to 800 h (inserts: the partial enlarged details with time range from 300 to 330 h (Left) and 380 to 410 h (Right)). (b) Voltage profile of the Li| $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$ |Li symmetric cell at a current density of  $0.1 \text{ mA cm}^{-2}$  at room temperature from 0 to 1000 h (inserts: the partial enlarged details with time range from 10 to 40 h (Left) and 910 to 940 h (Right)). The corresponding SEM images for the lithium foil surface of the Li symmetrical batteries with (c) Ni-MOF and (d)  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolyte after lithium plating/stripping. Schematic of the Li deposition behavior with (e) Ni-MOF and (f)  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$ .

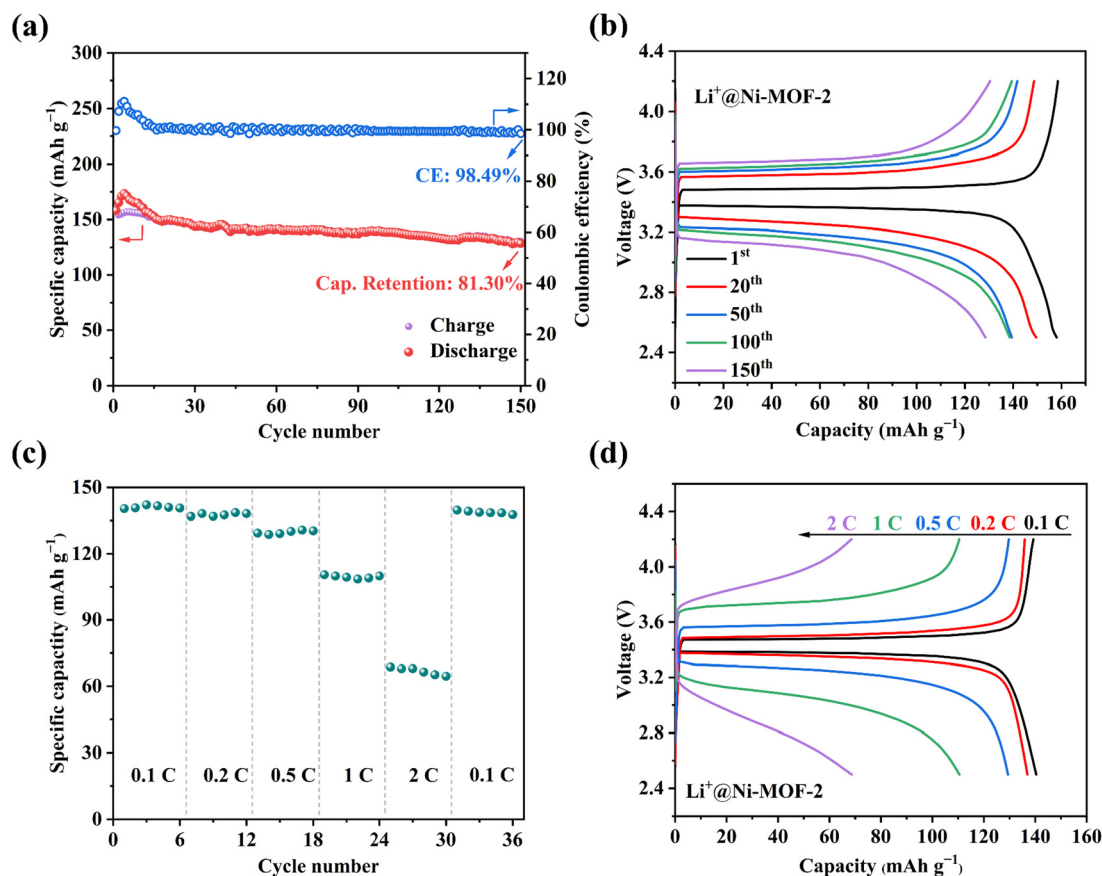
SSE as electrolytes was characterized in SEM analyses. Obviously, a very rough surface for the lithium electrode of the Ni-MOF cell can be observed, and a large number of cracks have been formed after constant current density cycling (Fig. 2c). On the contrary, the corresponding lithium metal in the  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  cell presents a relatively smooth surface under the same condition (Fig. 2d). The schematic diagrams of the Li deposition behavior are shown in Fig. 2e and f. The lithium deposition in the Ni-MOF cell may be attributed to the inhomogeneous  $\text{Li}^+$  diffusion, further causing a short circuit in the battery. Obviously, the  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolyte containing  $\text{Li}^+$  is conducive to the improvement of the interfacial compatibility, which is beneficial to accelerate the  $\text{Li}^+$  transport and the formation of a uniform interface.<sup>62</sup> Meanwhile, the dense lithium surface can inhibit the growth of lithium dendrites, exhibiting a better interfacial stability between the lithium metal electrode and electrolyte film.

In order to investigate the practical applicability of the prepared SSEs, full cells with the configuration  $\text{LFP}|\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}|\text{Li}$  have been assembled and cycle-tested, where LFP serves as the cathode of the cell and lithium metal is the anode. The interfacial compatibility between  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  and the cathode material has been evaluated by the tests for the long-term cycling stability of the  $\text{LFP}|\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}|\text{Li}$  cell at a

corresponding current of 0.1 C. As presented in Fig. 3a and b, the initial discharge capacity of  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  is  $158.03 \text{ mAh g}^{-1}$ , which is close to the theoretical discharge capacity of  $170 \text{ mAh g}^{-1}$ . Then, the capacity retention still can reach 87.67% after 100 cycles, and the discharge capacity decreased to  $128.48 \text{ mAh g}^{-1}$  with 81.30% capacity retention after 150 cycles. At this point, the coulombic efficiency can still be as high as 98.49%. Notably, the average discharge capacity loss after each cycle is only 0.19% of the initial value, demonstrating the good cycling performance for the  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolyte. With LFP as the cathode and  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  as the SSE, the assembled battery demonstrated good capacity retention rates after constant-current charge/discharge cycling (Table S7). The experimental results above are closely related to the formation of a good solid electrolyte interface during long-term cycling.

Then, the PXRD tests on  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolytes after constant current charge/discharge cycling characterization were performed. As indicated in Fig. S9, compared to the original Ni-MOF sample, no significant change in the diffraction peak positions and peak intensity can be seen for the cycled  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  electrolytes, indicating their excellent electrochemical stability in the lithium battery working process.

The rate performance of  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  SSE has been tested for different magnifications at room temperature at currents



**Fig. 3** (a) Charge/discharge capacity and coulombic efficiency of  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$ . (b) Charge/discharge cycling curves of  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  at 0.1 C. (c) Rate performance of  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  SSEs. (d) Charge and discharge voltage profiles of  $\text{Li}^+\text{@Ni-MOF-2}$  at different rates.



**Fig. 4** Photographs of the bulbs lit by LFP|Li<sup>+</sup>@Ni-MOF|Li cells at different temperatures: (a) RT, (b) −20 °C, (c) −30 °C, (d) −40 °C, (e) and (f) −45 °C, (g) 30 °C, and (h) 25 °C.

corresponding to 0.1, 0.2, 0.5, 1.0, and 2.0 C (1 C = 170 mA g<sup>−1</sup>) (Fig. 3c and d). The Li<sup>+</sup>@Ni-MOF-2 cell discharge capacity was 140.11, 136.94, 129.41, 110.52, and 68.65 mAh g<sup>−1</sup>, respectively. In particular, the discharge capacity of the LFP|Li<sup>+</sup>@Ni-MOF-2|Li cell recovered to 139.71 mAh g<sup>−1</sup> after several cycles when the current was adjusted to 0.1 C, which is comparable to the initial discharge capacity, indicating the excellent multiplicity performance of the Li<sup>+</sup>@Ni-MOF-2 electrolyte.

Actually, good electrochemical properties for SSEs at low temperatures play a key role in the practical application. Thus, the low-temperature performance of Li<sup>+</sup>@Ni-MOF-2 was studied in detail. Firstly, two LFP|Li<sup>+</sup>@Ni-MOF-2|Li full cells were assembled and mounted on the LED devices, and sequentially exposed to different temperature environments (room temperature (RT), −20 °C, −30 °C, −40 °C, −45 °C, 30 °C and 25 °C) (Fig. 4). Then, the bulbs were lit with different brightness. The bulb became brighter with higher temperature, which is attributed to temperature decreases causing an increase of the resistance in the electrolyte. In addition, with the increasing voltage drop as the current passes through the bulb, there is a lower actual voltage output to the bulb, resulting in a decrease in brightness. Notably, the LED bulb can be lit for at least 8 minutes at −45 °C, which indicates that the Li<sup>+</sup>@Ni-MOF-2 solid-state electrolyte still has good electrochemical performance and stability under an ultra-low temperature environment, featuring its good potential in practical application.

## Conclusions

In summary, a cation-exchange strategy between Li<sup>+</sup> and (CH<sub>3</sub>)<sub>2</sub>NH<sub>2</sub><sup>+</sup> was employed for developing an anionic Ni-MOF SSE. The abundant free lithium ions in the MOF pores significantly enhanced the electrochemical performance of the SSE. In comparison with the original Ni-MOF, the Li<sup>+</sup>@Ni-MOF-2 electrolyte revealed obvious electrochemical performance improvement, presenting a  $\sigma$  value of  $1.28 \times 10^{-3}$  S cm<sup>−1</sup> at 25 °C and  $2.36 \times 10^{-3}$  S cm<sup>−1</sup> at 100 °C,  $E_a$  of 0.08 eV from 10 to 100 °C,  $t_{Li^+}$  of 0.76 and ESW of 5.3 V. Importantly, it still retained the  $\sigma$

value of  $2.12 \times 10^{-4}$  S cm<sup>−1</sup> at an ultra-low temperature (−40 °C) and was employed to keep LED lights on continuously at −45 °C. Moreover, LFP|Li<sup>+</sup>@Ni-MOF-2|Li full cells with the first discharge capacity of 158.03 mAh g<sup>−1</sup> stably cycled for 150 cycles at a current density of 0.1 C with a capacity retention of 81.30%. This ion-exchange method has achieved an effective balance and improvement among the key electrochemical properties, providing the possibility for the efficient operation of batteries within a wide temperature range.

## Author contributions

The manuscript was written with contributions from all authors. All authors have approved of the final version of the manuscript.

## Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts to declare.

## Data availability

All the data needed to evaluate this work are available in the main manuscript and/or the SI.

The contents of the SI file includes PXRD pattern, SEM images, FT-IR spectra, TGA, N<sub>2</sub> Ads./Des. isotherms, ICP and other electrochemical test data. See DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1039/d5dt01485a>.

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