THINK B · THINK BEYOND

The Siang Dam Question

One issue. 4 GS papers. 3 dimensions. 1 water security test.

15 NOVEMBER 2026

CURRENT AFFAIRS → MULTIDIMENSIONAL THINKING

⚡THE ISSUE IN 30 SECONDS

FACT	WHY IT MATTERS
SUMP is a proposed dam on the Siang	NHPC is preparing a Pre-Feasibility Report, an early study
Estimated capacity is 11,000 to 11,200 MW	It was first declared a national project in 2008
Adi community cites 40 villages affected	It says 27 would be submerged; government cites flood control
China plans the Medog dam upstream	Backers say larger storage could cushion sudden upstream releases

CORE IDEA: The Siang project shows that strategic water security and local rights must be reconciled: India's approval process, informed consent, impact studies and rehabilitation planning need to move together with upstream risk management, before any dam is built.

🌍THINK BEYOND

Upstream dam plans raise water risk → **India proposes storage on the Siang** → **Communities raise rights concerns** → **Consent and studies matter** → **Dialogue shapes legitimacy** → **Security and rights need balance**

Can national water security and local community rights be secured together?

🗂UPSC CONNECT

🌍 GS1 · SOCIETY
Tribal communities, land, culture and displacement

Use in: Tribal rights • Displacement

🏛 GS2 · GOVERNANCE
Centre-State relations, consent and transboundary water

Use in: Federalism • Consent

⚡ GS3 · ENVIRONMENT
Hydropower, dams, impact assessment and water security

Use in: Dams • Environment

⚖ GS4 · ETHICS
Public interest, local rights and justice in development

Use in: Consent • Justice

🎯OPTIONAL CONNECT

PUB ADMIN	PSIR	SOCIOLOGY	GEOGRAPHY
Project clearance and **consent** processes	Transboundary **rivers** and security	Tribal **communities** and displacement	Brahmaputra **basin** and hydropower

✏HOW CAN I USE THIS IN MAINS?

ESSAY *"Development lasts only when affected communities are partners."*

GS3 *Use this to discuss hydropower, dams and environmental clearance.*

GS2 *Use it to discuss consent, Centre-State coordination and transboundary water.*

GS4 *Use it to discuss public interest, local rights and justice.*

👤THINK LIKE AN OFFICER

★ KEY SECTION

CASE: You are a District Collector of a border district where a proposed dam study has raised community concerns, and you must keep dialogue open while the study continues.

YOU HAVE 60 SECONDS: WHAT DO YOU DO?

☐ Proceed without village consent ☐ Stop all studies indefinitely

☐ Hold open dialogue and share study scope ☐ Rely on force alone

MODEL ADMINISTRATIVE APPROACH

1 · OPEN DIALOGUE
Meet village councils and community leaders

2 · EXPLAIN STUDY SCOPE
Make clear what the pre-feasibility study covers

3 · RECORD CONSENT
Document free, informed and voluntary consent

4 · PLAN SAFEGUARDS
Prepare impact, rehabilitation and disaster plans

🔑3 THINGS TO REMEMBER

01 · CONNECT
Security and rights go together

02 · THINK
Consent builds legitimacy

03 · APPLY
Apply this across GS1-4, Essay and optionals