Naying Project on the Siyom: Forest Panel Recommends In-Principle Clearance; Not the Same as the Siang SUMP

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Mains: GS-III: Energy, Environment; GS-II: Local Rights



Original symbolic image: pcsmantra.com

Why in the News

The Forest Advisory Committee has recommended in-principle forest clearance for the proposed 1,000 MW Naying hydroelectric project on Arunachal Pradesh's Siyom river. According to a report of 6 November, the proposal was considered at the committee's meeting of 23 October. This should not be read as final construction permission, the project being completed, or electricity generation having started.

This development comes at a time when large dams, local rights and the environment are under debate in the wider Siang region. But conflating Naying with the 11,200 MW Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP) would be wrong. The river, the capacity and the decision process of the two are different.

How Siang and Siyom Are Related

Siyom: a tributary of the Siang. The proposed Naying project is on the Siyom, near Yapik village in Arunachal Pradesh's Shi-Yomi and Siang districts. A **river basin** is the area whose water reaches the main river and its tributaries. A project on a tributary can also affect the wider basin.

Aspect	Naying	Siang Upper Multipurpose Project
River context	Siyom, a tributary of the Siang	Siang
Proposed capacity	1,000 MW	11,200 MW
This article's news reference	Recommendation of in-principle forest clearance	Reference to the earlier local debate and the pre-feasibility study; Naying's recommendation is not SUMP's approval

Naying's Verified Basics

The proceedings of the Environment Ministry's Expert Appraisal Committee of May 2026 describe Naying as a NEEPCO **run-of-the-river** scheme. This is a hydroelectric scheme that uses the river's flow; the name does not mean zero reservoir, zero land impact or a completely unobstructed river.

The same official document puts the project area at 470.8 hectares. This is the project-related requirement of land, not installed generation capacity. NEEPCO's project list keeps it as a project in the pipeline. Separate clearances and the investment decision will have to be checked separately.

From Recommendation to Construction

Forest clearance: the legal process of diverting forest land for non-forest use. The committee's recommendation is a stage of the decision process. In-principle clearance can carry conditions, and compliance with them may be necessary before the final decision.

Environmental clearance: a separate assessment of the project's environmental impacts and management plan. Forest clearance is no substitute for it. Techno-economic appraisal, land acquisition, rehabilitation and investment approval are each their own questions.

Compensatory afforestation: the prescribed planting and related measures to compensate for the use of forest land. Planting new saplings does not immediately bring back an old forest's biodiversity and local communities' use in the same way.

The Bigger Questions for the Exam

Energy and strategy: hydropower can contribute to electricity supply and energy diversification. The context of border rivers also makes water security important. Yet a strategic argument does not end a project's own technical and social assessment.

Cumulative impact: the combined effect of many dams in one river system should be examined. Even if individual projects follow the rules, together they can affect flow, sediment, aquatic life and downstream communities.

Local rights: questions of land, livelihood, cultural sites and rehabilitation are not limited to the rate of compensation. Information in the local language, meaningful public hearings and reasoned answers to grievances are necessary. Participation in a preliminary study should not be taken as universal consent to final construction.

Hill risks: the site's geological condition, seismic risk, slope stability and disaster management must be examined project-specifically. Generally calling every dam safe or every project destructive is not useful analysis.

Way Forward

The capacity, river, proponent and clearance status of every project should be in a clear public list. Basin-level cumulative studies, environmental flows, independent compliance monitoring and transparent rehabilitation should go together. Trust in decisions will be built not by large capacity alone, but by the quality of the whole process.

Mains Practice Question

Several hydroelectric projects in one river basin should not be assessed only on the basis of their individual power capacity. Discuss with reference to the Siang-Siyom region. (15 marks, 250 words)

Answer Outline

Introduction: Clarify the concepts of a tributary and a basin.

Main Body: Give the difference between Naying and SUMP, the stages of clearances, cumulative impact, tribal livelihoods, and the balance of energy and disaster risk.

Conclusion: Emphasise basin-level study, local dialogue and independent monitoring.

Sources

- Environment Ministry: May 2026 EAC proceedings, Naying project information
- NEEPCO: projects in the pipeline
- Indian Express, 6 November: Forest Advisory Committee's recommendation