NOVEMBER 2026

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1. Transboundary Water Security: Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP) & Yarlung Tsangpo Hydropower Development

Syllabus Mapping: GS Paper 2 (India and its Neighborhood – Relations) & **GS Paper 3** (Disaster Management & Infrastructure)

Context: India is accelerating the implementation of the **11.2 Gigawatt (GW) Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP)** in Arunachal Pradesh to counter China's **60 GW mega dam** (Medog Dam) upstream on the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet.

Key Details & Features:

Project Specifications: SUMP is planned on the Siang River (which becomes the Brahmaputra in Assam) to act as a **strategic buffer and shock absorber** against upstream hydrological manipulations.

China's Upstream Project: China's State-owned China Yajiang Group broke ground in July 2025 on the **Medog Dam** at the **Great Bend** of the Yarlung Tsangpo. The project features **five cascading power stations** over a 2,000-metre drop across 50 km and includes a ~40 km diversion tunnel.

Hydrological & Geological Risks:

Seismic Risk: Located near the **Paizhen Fault** in the tectonically active Eastern Himalayas.

Water Weaponisation: Concerns exist over Beijing potentially diverting flows to create drought or releasing water en masse to flood Northeast India.

Operational Mechanism: Indian planners intend to keep the SUMP reservoir **70% full** to retain 30% capacity to absorb sudden floods.

Local Resistance: Members of the **Adi community** and civil rights groups are protesting coercive land surveys guarded by security forces under the **State Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act**.

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2. Sectoral Governance: Airfare Regulation under Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024

Syllabus Mapping: GS Paper 2 (Government Policies & Interventions for Development)

Context: The Ministry of Civil Aviation notified new rules under the **Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024**, empowering the Union Government to intervene in airfares during **"extraordinary situations"**.

Key Highlights:

Emergency Powers: The rules provide a statutory framework allowing the Centre to issue **written directions** on airfares in the public interest during extraordinary situations.

Undefined Triggers: The term "extraordinary situations" remains **undefined in the rules**, leaving scope for case-by-case government discretion.

Tariff Transparency & Filing:

Airlines must submit tariffs to the **Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA)**.

Booking portals and tickets must display the **total price payable**, with clear breakdowns of base fare, taxes, fees, cancellation charges, and refund conditions.

Incorporates requirements from the Air Transport Circular 2 of 2010.

Market-Driven Pricing Regime: Direct airfare capping was abolished in March 1994 with the repeal of the **Air Corporations Act**. Fares remain dynamic based on demand-supply dynamics, fuel costs, and occupancy.

Regulatory Bodies: The **DGCA** acts as the technical regulator for safety/airworthiness and does not set tariffs. The **Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA)** regulates aeronautical tariffs at major airports.

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3. Welfare Policy & Transparency: Grievance Redressal under VB-G RAM G

Syllabus Mapping: GS Paper 2 (Transparency and Accountability, E-Governance, Social Justice)

Context: The Ministry of Rural Development notified the Grievance Redressal Rules under the **Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G)**, which replaced the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

Scheme & Rule Framework:

Statutory Guarantee: VB-G RAM G guarantees **125 days** of rural wage employment per year to adult members of rural households volunteering for unskilled manual work via Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT).

4 Thematic Domains: Water security, rural infrastructure, livelihood infrastructure, and climate change mitigation.

Grievance Redress Timeline:

Inquiries must be completed within **7 days** of complaint receipt.

Grievances must be resolved within **15 days**.

Key Provisions Dropped (Compared to Draft/MGNREGA Rules):

Mandatory FIR: Dropped the requirement to register a **First Information Report (FIR)** upon prima facie evidence of financial irregularities.

Local Body Oversight: Dropped the mandate to present action-taken reports before Gram Panchayat meetings.

Designated Day: Omitted the requirement for a weekly designated grievance day for officials.

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4. Data Protection & Internal Security: AI Model Training & Privacy Rights

Syllabus Mapping: GS Paper 2 (Government Policies & DPDP Act) & **GS Paper 3** (Cyber Security & Data Protection)

Context: India's **Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023** lacks explicit provisions regulating personal data usage for training **Artificial Intelligence (AI) models**.

Key Issues & Legal Nuances:

Exclusions in DPDP Act: The DPDP Act excludes **publicly available data** and **inferred data** (behavioural patterns, emotional state, movements drawn from metadata) from its protective scope.

Regulatory Shift from IT Act 2000:

Under the IT Act, 2000 (and 2011 Rules), unauthorized disclosure of **sensitive personal data** (biometrics, financial data, health records) carried up to 3 years imprisonment or a ₹5 lakh fine.

The DPDP Act 2023 treats all personal data uniformly without maintaining a separate "sensitive data" category.

Privacy Risks from AI Training: AI models memorize training datasets and can **regurgitate personal details** or reconstruct individual profiles from anonymized public data.

Constitutional Framework: In **K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India (2017)**, the Supreme Court declared privacy a Fundamental Right under **Article 21**, subject to the **proportionality test**.

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5. Economy & Employment: Structural Transformation & Productive Employment

Syllabus Mapping: GS Paper 3 (Indian Economy, Employment & Mobilization of Resources)

Context: World Bank data indicates India reduced extreme poverty ($3/day line) to **2.6% in 2023**. However, the economic challenge has transitioned from survival to generating **productive non-farm jobs**.

Key Economic Metrics & Trends:

Poverty Reduction: Lower-middle income poverty ($4.2/day line) dropped from **57.7% in 2011 to 16.1% in 2023**.

Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR): Rose to **~59% in 2025** (for ages 15+), primarily driven by female entry into the workforce.

Structural Bottlenecks:

Agricultural Dependence: **~43%** of India's workforce remains in agriculture, compared to 21.68% in China and 25% in Vietnam.

Informal Non-Farm Sector: ~75% of non-farm workers are engaged in low-productivity informal enterprises.

Regional Inequality: **57% of India's poor** are concentrated in the belt extending from **Uttar Pradesh to West Bengal**.

Survey Details: The **Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS)** is conducted by **MoSPI**; monthly unemployment rates are measured using the **Current Weekly Status (CWS)** approach.

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6. Environment & Judiciary: Supreme Court Directives on Green Crackers

Syllabus Mapping: GS Paper 2 (Judiciary & Fundamental Rights) & **GS Paper 3** (Environmental Pollution & Degradation)

Context: The Supreme Court transitioned Deepavali firecracker regulations in the **Delhi-NCR** region from a complete ban to a **regulated 2-day window** for certified green crackers.

Core Regulatory Directives:

Permitted Schedule: Bursting permitted strictly on **November 7 and 8** between **6 AM–7 AM** and **8 PM–10 PM** (3 hours total per day).

Silence Buffer Zones: Barred within **300 metres** of hospitals, nursing homes, educational institutions, old age homes, and silence zones.

Manufacturing Standards:

- Only formulations certified by **CSIR-NEERI** (Nagpur) and **PESO** are allowed.
- Green crackers are **barium-free** and must feature product-specific **QR codes**.
- Total ban on joined crackers (**"ladis"**) and garlands.

Constitutional Balancing:

- Article 25(1): Religious practice is a qualified right subject to **public order, morality, and health**. The court noted scriptures

(Skandapurana and Padmapurana) refer to lighting lamps, whereas fireworks originated later with gunpowder.

Article 21: Guarantees the **Right to Life**, including a clean and healthy environment.

Precedent: Reaffirmed **Arjun Gopal v. Union of India (2018)**.

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7. International Relations: Western Sahara Conflict & UN Peacekeeping Mandate

Syllabus Mapping: GS Paper 2 (Important International Institutions & Global Geopolitics)

Context: The UN Peacekeeping Mission (**MINURSO**) in Western Sahara lapsed due to a **Security Council veto**, leaving Africa's longest-running territorial dispute without UN monitoring.

Conflict Profile & Geopolitical Breakdown:

Background: Territorial dispute between **Morocco** (claiming sovereignty) and the Algeria-backed **Polisario Front** (seeking an independent Sahrawi state) since Spain withdrew in **1976**.

UN Ceasefire & Mandate Expiry:

A UN-monitored ceasefire was established in **1991**.

Mandate lapsed after **Russia vetoed** a US-drafted UNSC resolution endorsing Morocco's regional autonomy plan.

Humanitarian Conditions:

The Polisario Front operates 5 refugee camps around **Tindouf** in southwestern Algeria.

Over **80%** of camp residents rely on the World Food Programme (WFP) for basic food security.

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Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

Q1. Consider the following statements regarding the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP):

It is designed as an 11.2 GW multipurpose project in Arunachal Pradesh to mitigate downstream flood and drought risks.

China's Medog Dam is situated near the Paizhen Fault line at the Great Bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo River.

Indian planners intend to maintain the SUMP reservoir at 100% full capacity at all times to maximize power generation. **Which of the statements given above are correct?** (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q2. With reference to the Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024, consider the following statements:

It provides a statutory basis for the Union Government to issue written airfare directions during extraordinary situations.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) is the statutory body empowered to fix standard maximum ticket tariffs for all domestic airlines. **Which of the statements given above is/are correct?** (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q3. Regarding the Grievance Redressal Rules under the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G), consider the following statements:

Grievance officers must complete their inquiry within 7 days and resolve complaints within 15 days of receipt.

The rules mandate the registration of an FIR whenever an inquiry finds prima facie evidence of financial irregularities.

The final rules omitted the requirement to present grievance action-taken reports before Gram Panchayat meetings. **Which of the statements given above are correct?** (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q4. Which of the following categories of data are explicitly excluded from the applicability of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023?

Publicly available data

Biometric data

Inferred personal data **Select the correct answer using the code given below:** (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q5. With reference to employment and poverty indicators in India, consider the following statements:

According to World Bank metrics ($3 a day line), extreme poverty in India fell to 2.6% in 2023.

Over 40% of India's workforce continues to depend on agriculture for employment.

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) is released by the NITI Aayog based on the Current Daily Status approach. **Which of the statements given above is/are correct?** (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 only
(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q6. With reference to the Supreme Court's directives regarding firecrackers in Delhi-NCR, consider the following statements:

Green crackers certified by CSIR-NEERI must be formulated without the use of barium.

The right to burst firecrackers as part of religious freedom under Article 25(1) is an absolute right not subject to public health limits.

Bursting green crackers is prohibited within a 300-metre radius of hospitals, educational institutions, and silence zones. **Which of the statements given above are correct?** (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q7. The term MINURSO, recently seen in the news, is associated with which of the following regional conflicts?

(a) Nagorno-Karabakh dispute
(b) Western Sahara territorial dispute
(c) Tigray crisis in Ethiopia
(d) Kuril Islands dispute

Q8. Consider the following statements regarding transboundary water dynamics between India and China:

China has agreed to automatically share complete daily operation data for all its Tibetan dams under a binding bilateral treaty.

Monsoon rains and downstream tributaries contribute a major share of the water volume in the Brahmaputra basin within Assam and Bangladesh. **Which of the statements given above is/are correct?** (a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2

(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q9. Consider the following statements regarding civil aviation oversight in India:

Direct control and capping of airfares was abolished following the repeal of the Air Corporations Act in 1994.

The Airports Economic Regulatory Authority (AERA) regulates aeronautical tariffs at major airports.

Airlines are required to display the total price payable, including all fees and cancellation conditions, on booking portals.

Which of the statements given above are correct ? (a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q10. Under the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) (VB-G RAM G), wage employment guarantees focus on which of the following thematic domains?

Water security

Livelihood infrastructure

Extreme weather events mitigation

Digital literacy centres **Select the correct answer using the code given below:** (a) 1, 2 and 3 only
(b) 2 and 4 only
(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2, 3 and 4

Q11. In the context of Indian data protection jurisprudence, consider the following statements:

Under the IT Act 2000, unauthorized disclosure of sensitive personal data was punishable with imprisonment up to three years.

The DPDP Act, 2023 creates a distinct statutory category for "sensitive personal data" with stricter consent requirements than ordinary data.

In K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India, the Supreme Court ruled that restrictions on privacy must satisfy the proportionality test
. **Which of the statements given above are correct?**

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 1 and 3 only
(c) 2 and 3 only
(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q12. Which of the following statements regarding structural economic trends in India is/are correct?

Around three-fourths of India's non-farm workforce is employed in informal enterprises.

Over 50% of India's poor population resides in the geographic belt stretching from Uttar Pradesh to West Bengal.

Select the correct answer using the code given below:

(a) 1 only
(b) 2 only
(c) Both 1 and 2
(d) Neither 1 nor 2

Q13. Regarding the Supreme Court guidelines on firecracker manufacturing and sales, consider the following:

Firecrackers joined in series ("ladis") are strictly barred from manufacture and sale.

Individual cracker boxes must carry product-specific QR codes.

Bursting hours during the permitted two-day window are restricted to 6 AM–7 AM and 8 PM–10 PM

. **Which of the statements given above are correct?**

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only

(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q14. With reference to the Western Sahara dispute, consider the following statements:

The Polisario Front is an organization backed by Algeria that advocates for an independent Sahrawi state.

The refugee camps managed by the Polisario Front are located near Tindouf in Algeria.

Over 80% of the residents in these refugee camps depend on humanitarian food assistance.

Which of the statements given above are correct?

(a) 1 and 2 only
(b) 2 and 3 only
(c) 1 and 3 only

(d) 1, 2 and 3

Q15. In Arjun Gopal v. Union of India (2018), the Supreme Court established jurisprudence regarding which of the following environmental issues?

(a) Ground water extraction limits for commercial bottling units
(b) Use of reduced-emission and green crackers to curb air pollution
(c) Mandatory environmental impact assessments for river-linking projects
(d) Stubble burning penalties under the Clean Air Act

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Answer Key & Detailed Explanations

Answer Key:

(a)
(a)
(b)
(b)
(a)
(b)
(b)
(b)
(d)
(a)
(b)
(c)
(d)
(d)
(b)

Explanations:

Q1: Correct Answer (a)

Statement 1 is correct: SUMP is planned as an 11.2 GW multipurpose project on the Siang River in Arunachal Pradesh to absorb sudden surges and act as a strategic buffer.

Statement 2 is correct: China's 60 GW Medog Dam sits at the Great Bend of the Yarlung Tsangpo in Tibet near the seismically vulnerable Paizhen Fault.

Statement 3 is incorrect: Planners intend to keep the SUMP reservoir **70% full** (leaving 30% capacity to absorb flood surges), not 100% full.

Q2: Correct Answer (a)

Statement 1 is correct: The Bharatiya Vayuyan Adhiniyam, 2024 enables the Centre to issue written directions to airlines on airfares during extraordinary situations.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The DGCA is the technical regulator for civil aviation safety and airworthiness; it **does not** fix or cap ticket fares.

Q3: Correct Answer (b)

Statement 1 is correct: The Grievance Redressal Rules mandate completing inquiries within 7 days and resolving complaints within 15 days.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The final notified rules **dropped** the draft provision requiring an automatic FIR upon prima facie evidence of financial irregularities.

Statement 3 is correct: The requirement to present action-taken reports before Gram Panchayat meetings was dropped from the final rules.

Q4: Correct Answer (b)

Statements 1 and 3 are correct: The DPDP Act, 2023 explicitly excludes **publicly available data** and **inferred data** (drawn from user behaviour/location) from its purview.

Statement 2 is incorrect: Biometric data is personal data, but unlike the IT Act 2000, the DPDP Act treats all personal data uniformly without a separate "sensitive personal data" classification.

Q5: Correct Answer (a)

Statement 1 is correct: World Bank figures show India reduced extreme poverty ($3/day line) to 2.6% in 2023.

Statement 2 is correct: Agriculture still accounts for approximately **43%** of India's workforce.

Statement 3 is incorrect: PLFS is conducted by the **Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)**, not NITI Aayog, and uses the Current Weekly Status (CWS) approach.

Q6: Correct Answer (b)

Statement 1 is correct: Green crackers engineered by CSIR-NEERI eliminate toxic barium.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The Supreme Court ruled that religious practice under Article 25(1) is a **qualified right** subject to public order, health, and morality.

Statement 3 is correct: Bursting is strictly barred within 300 metres of hospitals, old age homes, educational institutions, and silence zones.

Q7: Correct Answer (b)

Explanation: MINURSO is the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara established in 1991 following a ceasefire between Morocco and the Polisario Front.

Q8: Correct Answer (b)

Statement 1 is incorrect: China has refused to share dam operational details or enter a comprehensive treaty, agreeing only to share emergency hydrological data.

Statement 2 is correct: Most of the Brahmaputra basin's water volume in Assam and Bangladesh originates from monsoon precipitation and downstream tributaries within India.

Q9: Correct Answer (d)

Statement 1 is correct: Airfares became market-driven following the repeal of the Air Corporations Act in March 1994.

Statement 2 is correct: AERA regulates aeronautical tariffs at major designated airports.

Statement 3 is correct: Under the new airfare rules, airlines must display full price transparency, detailing base fare, taxes, fees, and refund conditions.

Q10: Correct Answer (a)

Explanation: VB-G RAM G covers four thematic domains: (1) Water security, (2) Rural infrastructure, (3) Livelihood infrastructure, and (4) Mitigation of extreme weather events. Digital literacy centres are not listed among its 4 core domains.

Q11: Correct Answer (b)

Statement 1 is correct: The IT Act, 2000 and 2011 Rules penalized unauthorized disclosure of sensitive personal data with up to 3 years imprisonment or a ₹5 lakh fine.

Statement 2 is incorrect: The DPDP Act, 2023 removed the separate category of "sensitive personal data", placing all personal data under one standard framework.

Statement 3 is correct: K.S. Puttaswamy (2017) established that any state restriction on privacy must satisfy the proportionality test.

Q12: Correct Answer (c)

Statement 1 is correct: Approximately three-fourths (75%) of non-farm workers are employed in informal enterprises.

Statement 2 is correct: The World Bank estimates that 57% of India's poor live in the belt spanning from Uttar Pradesh to West Bengal.

Q13: Correct Answer (d)

Statement 1 is correct: Crackers joined in series ("ladis") and garlands are banned from manufacture and sale.

Statement 2 is correct: Cracker packages must carry product-specific QR codes verified by CSIR-NEERI/PESO.

Statement 3 is correct: Permitted hours are 6:00 AM–7:00 AM and 8:00 PM–10:00 PM (3 hours per day).

Q14: Correct Answer (d)

Statement 1 is correct: The Polisario Front is an Algeria-backed political and military movement seeking an independent Sahrawi state.

Statement 2 is correct: Tindouf (southwestern Algeria) hosts five Sahrawi refugee camps.

Statement 3 is correct: World Food Programme (WFP) data indicates over 80% of refugees in these camps depend on aid for basic food needs.

Q15: Correct Answer (b)

Explanation: In Arjun Gopal and Others v. Union of India (2018), the Supreme Court permitted only reduced-emission and green crackers to tackle severe winter air pollution in Delhi-NCR