struction of this dam. Bangladesh would have to face serious consequences if this dam is constructed. Even the people of Manipur and Nagaland would have to suffer.

Barak-Surma-Kushiara is an international river. Bangladesh, being a lower riparian country, has the right to an equitable share of the water from the river, and also a right to examine the details of the construction of this dam. No detailed plan of the dam has been provided to Bangladesh to appraise its full impact on Bangladesh. India, being an upper riparian country, has an obligation under international law to discuss the construction of such a massive infrastructure on the common river with lower riparian Bangladesh.

Prof. Mustafizur Rahman Tarafdar, a water resources expert, in an article titled "Tipaimukh Dam: An alarming venture," discussed the ill-effects of the Tipaimukh Dam. If this dam is eventually constructed as intended, Bangladesh would have to suffer the adverse effects.

This dam would lead to drought and environmental degradation. It would cause the Surma and Kushiara to run dry during November to May, which would eventually hamper agriculture, irrigation and navigation and lead to a shortage of supply of drinking water, etc. The shortage of water in these few months would decrease ground water which over the years would lower the ground water level, which in turn would affect all dug outs and shallow tubewells. Agriculture, which is dependent on both surface as well as ground water, would also be affected.

Also, any interference in the normal flow of water in the Barak would have an adverse effect on the Surma River in Bangladesh which, in turn, feeds the mighty Meghna River that flows through Bangladesh. This dam would hamper the cultivation of early variety of boro in the northeast. Arable land will decrease and production of crops will fall, leading to an increase in poverty. Roughly 7 to 8 percent of the total water of Bangladesh is obtained from the Barak River. Millions of people are dependent on hundreds of water bodies fed by the Barak in the Sylhet region for fishing and agricultural activities.

A dam-break is a catastrophic failure of a dam which results in the sudden draining of the reservoir and a severe flood wave that causes destruction and in many cases death downstream. If the Tipaimukh Dam were to break, impounding billions of cubic metres of water, it would cause catastrophic floods because of its colossal structure.

According to an article published by Dr. Soibam Ibotombi, teacher of earth sciences at Manipur University, the north-eastern part of India is one of the highest earthquake-prone areas in the world due to its tectonic setting, i.e. subduction, as well as collision plate convergence. Analysis has revealed that hundreds of earthquakes have taken place in this region in the last 100-200 years. Study on the trends of earthquakes reveals that earthquakes mostly take place in regions which have experienced earthquakes in the past. The Tipaimukh Dam site has been chosen at the highest risk seismically hazardous zone. Inhabitants of Manipur also believe that this dam would prove to be a grave threat to the flora and fauna and endangered species like pythons, gibbons, herbal and medicinal plants. They also fear that the dam would submerge as many as 90 villages within a 311 sq-km radius.

Renowned water expert Dr. Ainun Nishat recently mentioned that construction of the Tipaimukh Dam will not bring any benefits to Bangladesh. Similar concerns are also being raised by another water expert S. I. Khan. Both of them suggested that the government should have a serious discussion with the Indian government. Bangladesh must request India to refrain from the construction of this dam at the proposed site.

According to these two experts if the dam is constructed, 16 districts of greater Sylhet will be affected. The immense natural disaster that will take place would be irreplaceable. Even though the Indian government is saying once the dam is constructed, electricity will be generated and Bangladesh will benefit by importing the electricity. It does not make sense to make a certain part of Bangladesh a desert area solely for the purpose of importing electricity.

The ever-increasing demand for fresh water has propelled the construction of dams and barrages on international rivers, and it is reported that 60% of the world's largest rivers have been interrupted by the artificial structures. Many of

