The Tipaimukh Dam Controversy

NADIM JAHANGIR examines the effects of the Tipaimukh Dam on Bangladesh



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THE government of India has initiated construction of the Tipaimukh Dam 500m downstream from the confluence of the Barak, the second largest drainage system to the northeast of India and a kilometre north of Jakiganj in Sylhet, Bangladesh, and the Tuivai river in the southwestern corner of Manipur, India.

The dam is proposed to be some 180m above sea level, with a maximum reservoir level of 178m and 136m as the minimum level. It is said to be the world's largest rock fall dam. The main purpose for constructing this dam is for hydro-electric power generation, having an installation capacity of 1,500MW.

It is also likely to work as a flood control dam for the Manipur and Mizoram states in India and for irrigation purposes along the 1km stretch of the Barak River up to the Bangladesh border and by the fringe of the reservoir boundary.

Indian authorities have targeted to complete the project by 2012. But construction of this dam is being strongly opposed not only by concerned Bangladeshis, but also by the people of India.

First initiatives for this construction started in 2003. Attempts were made by the Indian government to start construction of this dam earlier but the process had to be stalled amidst violent national and international protests in 2007.

There are numerous reasons for such opposition towards the con-