Comprehensive Security in the Asia-Pacific Region



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Introduction

In 2009, media, political parties, and civil society groups in Bangladesh and Manipur State in India have been intensely debating the issue of the construction of Tipaimukh dam in Manipur state in India. Officially known as the Tipaimukh Multipurpose Hydroelectric Project, the dam is to be constructed over Barak River, 500 meters downstream where the Barak and Tuivai Rivers meet in Manipur state. Bangladesh gets 7-8 percent of its total water requirements from Barak River. It is, therefore, natural that serious concerns about the possible adverse effects of the construction of the dam would be present in any public discourse in Bangladesh about the dam. Civil society and ethnic groups in Manipur have also criticised the construction of the dam. Water resource experts in Bangladesh believe that the country would face a monumental environmental crisis once the dam is commissioned. These experts are of the opinion that the construction of the dam on Barak River would seriously limit water available in Surma and Kushyara Rivers in Bangladesh. They also point out that these two rivers and their distributaries support agriculture, irrigation, navigation, drinking