Myanmar Dam near Manipur

What is the issue?

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- Myanmar is building a new dam, close to the border near Manipur.
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- This has raised some concerns among the border villages in Manipur.
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What is the project?

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- The dam, called Tuidimjang, is being built on the Twigem river.
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- Twigem river flows into Myanmar from Manipur..
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- The dam is barely 100 metres from the zero line separating the two countries.
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- International rules warrant border countries to check activities in No Man’s Land.
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- This applies to a 150-metre strip on either side of the boundary line.
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What are the concerns?

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- Border villagers in Kengjoi subdivison of Manipur’s Chandel district are concerned of the project.

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- The residents of Khangtung village recently reported to the district officials.
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- Khangtung is inhabited by the Thadou tribe and is 137 km south of Manipur capital Imphal.
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- The villagers, dependent on the river, are already facing water scarcity.
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- Given the topography of the area, the new project could make it even more vulnerable.
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- If the dam comes up, Khangtung and other Indian villages will be submerged.
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- Villagers will have to be relocated and rehabilitated.
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- This may have huge negative social, cultural and economic impact on the residents.
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How are the internal dams in Manipur?

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- **Mapithel** - Mapithel dam, initially known as Thoubal Multipurpose Project, aimed to produce 7.5MW of power.
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- Irrigation and providing drinking water were also the objectives.
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- Despite inking an understanding with the State government, the villagers were not facilitated with a proper relocation site.
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- In June 2015, a tribal village named Chadong in Ukhrul district was submerged.
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- **Khuga dam** - Taken up in 1980, the project lies south of Manipur's Churachandpur town.
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- Lying dormant until 2002, it led to a cost escalation from the initial Rs. 15 crore to more than Rs. 350 crore in 2009.
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- The project sanction by the Planning Commission was said to have inherent flaws.
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- Resultantly, the power component of 1.5MW incorporated in the initial design was scrapped despite near-completion of a powerhouse.
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- **Tipaimukh** - It is a mega hydroelectric project proposed on river Barak in Manipur 35 years ago.
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- Bangladesh is against this project, as Barak flows into it from Manipur through southern Assam.
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- It feeds the Surma and Kushiara rivers in Bangladesh.
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What do they imply?

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- Many of the internal dams in Manipur are already facing varied controversies and limitations.
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- A number of ecological, political and procedural aspects of the projects are causes of concern for the region.
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- The dam by Myanmar, close to the border, is a new threat to the ecological and water sustainability of the region.
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- The Chandel district officials are expected to survey the dam construction site to assess the condition.
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Source: The Hindu

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