



Students studying under solar-powered lights at a home in Nyaung Kone, a remote farming village north of Yenangyoung Township, Magway Region on 26 February 2017. PHOTO: REUTERS

## Myanmar plans to boost electricity access with coal

>> FROM PAGE 1

In 2014, around 70 percent of Myanmar's 51.4 million people did not have access to national grid power. In rural areas, the figure was 84 percent.

Myanmar's power distribution utilities added about 200,000 residential customers in 2013. At that rate, it would take nearly 40 years to get everyone connected.

Rural households spend more money on electricity, and use unsustainable and even dangerous energy sources such as diesel generators, kerosene, car and motorcycle batteries, and candles. One hour of diesel power in rural Myanmar costs roughly the same as 24 hours of power in the city of Yangon.

Myanmar's energy consumption is among the lowest in the world. One Burmese person, on average, consumes around 160 kilowatt hours (kWh) annually - 20 times less than the world average of 3,000 kWh per capita.

But this is changing, with

peak load demand growing at an average 14 percent per year in the past five years.

Around two-thirds of Myanmar's 4.6 gigawatt power capacity comes from hydroelectric dams. Natural gas accounts for 29 percent and coal-fired power 3 percent.

Due to heavy reliance on hydropower, the system cannot meet peak demand during the dry season, leading to frequent and prolonged blackouts.

Myanmar currently has three master plans to meet its future energy needs, formulated by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank.

The National Electrification Plan (NEP) aims to make 7.2 million new household connections, and achieve 100 percent access to electricity by 2030, mainly by extending the grid.

The NEP's first phase began with a \$400 million loan from the World Bank. The plan calls for in-

vestments of \$5.8 billion over the next 15 years. As yet, it is unclear where the rest of the funding will come from. The Myanmar Energy Master Plan projects an increase in coal's share of electricity output to almost 30 percent in 2030, up from less than 2 percent in 2015. Hydropower is projected to drop from 65 percent to 57 percent but remains the largest generator. Solar, by comparison, sees a modest rise from 0 to 5 percent.

Myanmar's coal is considered low quality with high moisture content. Coal is a major source of greenhouse gas emissions.

Myanmar's previous administration gave responsibility for off-grid rural electrification to a department under the agriculture ministry, instead of the powerful Ministry of Electricity and Energy. This stops other government agencies from working on renewable energy projects, and limits private-sector participation, critics say.—Reuters

## Journalists interview authorities, family members of suspects in Buthidaung

JOURNALISTS from foreign and local media organisations left Sit-tway for Buthidaung by watercraft yesterday.

The media group went to Taung Bazar village in Buthidaung Township, where they were briefed by Police Inspector Tun Naing from Taung bazaar police station and Tinnmay village tract administrator about the discovery of illegal training being conducted for violent attacks in Tinnmay vil-



Police Inspector Tun Naing answers questions by media. PHOTO: MNA

lage. The violent attack plot was foiled by security forces. The media representatives were allowed to interview local authorities independently. The group then met with the village in-charge in Tinnmay village and asked about the

arrest of 17 suspects and security measures of the village. They also interrogated two family members of the arrested persons who were said to be involved in the plot for violent attacks.—Myanmar News Agency

## Village leader and wife in Maungtaw attacked

A household leader of Ywarthitkay Village, Maungtaw and his wife were attacked with knives in their home on Monday.

The household leader Nu-harmain and his wife were asleep in their house when four local residents led by HabiUlla shouted, "Our group members are being arrested because of you, let them go and come out," after which they barged through the front door and attacked with

knives, police said.

Nuharmain received eight knife wounds while defending himself and his wife suffered a direct pierce to the chest and other wounds to her legs. The four assailants fled when Nuharmain shouted out for help.

Police officers sent the two victims to Maungtaw General Hospital and are in pursuit of the four assailants.—Myanmar News Agency

## Eighty-eight Myanmar fishermen brought home from India safely

>> FROM PAGE 1

The fishermen who had been clearly identified as Myanmar citizens were handed over by officials of India, the first secretary of the Embassy of Myanmar in New Delhi, U Zaw Naing Win, heads of embassy in the Consulate General of Myanmar in Kolkata, U Tin Tun Aung and U Kyaw Nay Soe, to Myanmar authorities led by Director U Myint Soe.

It is known that seven of the fishermen were from Tanithayi

Region, 66 from Ayeyawady Region, two from Yangon Region and 13 from Rakhine and Mon States. All arrived home safely, officials said. According to the record of the Ministry of Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, Myanmar fishermen were brought back to Myanmar by airlines or ships starting from 1988. But, they were brought back to Myanmar by charter flights in 2011, 2013 and 2015 respectively.—Myanmar News Agency

## Amphetamine tablets seized in Maungtaw

WHILE on patrol in Maungtaw Township on Monday evening, regional security forces seized a large number of amphetamine tablets, it is learnt.

At about 11pm, security forces from the Pantawpyin police outpost, together with responsible persons from the village, saw two unknown persons running away, leaving a basket nearby the Padin creek between Pantawpyin Village/west and Khaungtaga village.



Opon searching the basket, 2,400 tablets of amphetamines with the brand names of WY & R stamped on them were seized. The two unknown persons carrying the illegal narcotics are still at large and are being sought.—Myanmar News Agency

## Export value increases by US\$ 331.804 million

THE export value as of 17 March in this fiscal year was up by US\$331.804 million when compared to the same period of last year, according to the ministry of commerce statistics.

Export value amounted to US\$10.88 billion in this fiscal year, which is up from US\$10.54 billion from last year.

Myanmar exports agricultural products, livestock, fishery products, minerals, forest products, manufacturing and other products. Out of seven export sectors, minerals and manufactured goods export decreased

against the export value of last fiscal year whereas the other products could be more exported.

The export values in this fiscal year were US\$2.72 billion in agricultural products, US\$9.795 million in livestock products, US\$540.979 million in fishery products, US\$882.563 million in minerals, US\$223.649 million in forest products, US\$5031.224 million in manufactured goods and US\$1.46 billion in other products, according to the Ministry of Commerce statistics.—Min Min