

## ENERGY

# Grid glitch sparks huge power outage

## POST REPORTERS

A blackout lasting almost an hour in various parts of the country yesterday was caused by a problem with a transmission line leading to a power plant in Laos which provides electricity for Thailand, said the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (Egat).

Saharath Boonpotipukdee, Egat's deputy governor for renewable and new energy, said parts of the North, Northeast, Central Plains and Bangkok suffered a blackout at 1.06pm.

A preliminary examination found that the blackout was caused by a glitch at the 500kW transmission line of Hongsa power plant in Laos, he noted.

Egat tackled the problem by diverting power into the system from the Wang Noi plant in Ayutthaya, the Bang Pakong power plant in Chachoengsao and the South Bangkok power plant in Samut Prakan. Power was fully resumed at 1.55pm.

Sermsakul Klaikaew, governor of the Provincial Electricity Authority (PEA), said about 30 provinces were affected by the outage.

After power from the plant in Laos was lost, the PEA implemented its contingency plan which involved cutting the power in some areas to ensure that areas designated as "high priority" would remain unaffected for the duration, Mr Sermsakul added.

Meanwhile, people took to social media to report about the outage in the North, including Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Lampang. Egat indicated no power failures happened in important areas.

In Lop Buri, the blackout was reported to have caused the traffic chaos around intersections in Muang and other districts as traffic lights went off.

King Narai Hospital, Lopburi Cancer Hospital, state agencies and shopping malls in the province were reported to have experienced a large number of people stuck in lifts due to the blackout occurring at lunchtime.

This caused a particular strain on the emergency services.

Multiple phone calls were made to electricity offices in the province as people wanted to know what had happened.

Supant Mongkolsuthree, chairman of the Federation of Thai Industries (FTI), said he has not yet been informed about the possible financial losses incurred from the outage which could have happened with the federation's members which run factories. The extent of these losses would depend on the factory size and their investment in backup power systems, he said.

"The outage which lasted less than an hour, however, should not have caused much damage since industrial factories have a backup power system of one or two hours so the machinery was unlikely to have been affected much," Mr Supant said.



## Blowin' in the wind

Power-generating wind turbines stand above hills at Ban Phet Dam in Phetchaburi's Khao Kho district. With a total of 24 turbines, each with a capacity of 2.5 megawatts, the site has now become a tourist attraction. Invested in by SET-listed Demco Plc, the wind turbines have been operating since August 2016. WICHAN CHAROENKIATPAKUL