

# MYANMAR TIMES

## Rats wreak havoc on Ayeyarwady paddy

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An estimated 3000 acres of paddy fields has turned to waste after colonies of rats invaded villages in Nga-Youte Kaung sub-township of Patheingyi district in Ayeyarwady Region, local farmers said.

“Rats have been destroying the paddy since June,” local development activist Ma Soe Soe San told The Myanmar Times. “They destroyed not only garden plants and fruit but also paddy. Now, farmers are in trouble.”

She added that the rodents have been feasting on thousands of acres more of paddy fields in Queen Bat, Kan Maw, Sabar Gyi and Nat Maw villages.

The local farmers and development activists have began collecting data about the fields that were destroyed to seek help from the government, said Ma Soe Soe San.

“I had seven acres of paddy fields. Now, almost six acres of them are destroyed by rats. And then, rain is expected to come, so all farmers are afraid to plant winter cereals,” said U Myint Naing, a farmer from Queen Bat village.

He also said about 500 acres of paddy fields in Queen Bat have been destroyed by the rats.

“I have lost three of my five acres of paddy fields. The remaining two acres have been untouched because these are still under water, said U Myint Thein, another farmer in Queen Bat.

According to the Queen Bat farmers, most of the paddy fields in the area were destroyed by the rats and they do not have paddy seed for the next planting season.

They tried to poison and trap the rodents, but their colony just kept on increasing.

Local people said government officials have yet to visit them to inquire about their plight.

“Township administration officials have not given orders to collect information about the paddy fields destroyed by rats. We do hope the officials can compensate the loss of farmers,” said development activist U Maung Kan from Thit Yaung village in Nga Yout Kaung township.

A Nga Yout Kaung township administration department official said they have not received any reports of rat infestation in the township.

Rodent experts from the government had researched the reasons for the migration of rats and found that the rats invaded the villages in search of food, as their population had doubled after they feasted on bamboo fruit, which boosted their rate of reproduction.