

1,200 crimes, 285 dead, 1,073 injured nationwide during Thingyan Festival

DESPITE security efforts, there were still numerous cases of accidents and crimes during the water festival. An increase from last year's total.

On the last day of the water festival, 61 crimes occurred, including one murder case, 13 injuries from five car accidents, 29 injuries from 20 violence cases, seven other cases, two cases involving arms, two drug cases, 23 suspected cases of theft, and one death case.

A total of 1,200 crimes occurred and caused 285 deaths and 1,073 injured.

Compared to last year's figures of 967 crimes, 272 deaths and 1,086 injured cases, 233 more cases and 13 more deaths occurred in this year's

water festival.

In Nay Pyi Taw Union Territory, there were 39 cases that resulted in 10 deaths and 28 injuries. In Kachin State, there were 34 cases resulting in nine deaths and 15 injuries. In Kayah State there were seven cases that resulted in one death and six injuries. In Kayin State, there were 15 cases resulting in five deaths and 31 injuries. In Chin State, there were three cases in which one died and one was injured. In Sagaing Region, there were 167 cases resulting in 26 deaths and 194 injuries. In Taninthayi Region there were 42 cases in which 11 persons died and 35 were injured. In Bago Region, there were 154 cases resulting in

37 deaths and 183 injuries. In Magway Region, there were 56 cases in which 11 died and 45 were injured. In Mandalay Region, there were 160 cases that resulted in 36 deaths and 136 injuries.

In Mon State, there were 50 cases in which 20 died and 66 were injured. In Rakhine State, there were 47 cases in which 17 died and 66 were injured. In Yangon Region, there were 223 cases in which 44 died and 111 were injured. In Shan State, there were 59 cases in which 29 died and 52 were injured. In Ayeyawaddy Region, there were 144 cases resulting in 28 deaths and 104 injuries.—*Than oo (Laymyet hna)*

Fire destroys twelve shops in Maungtaw

AN outbreak of fire caused by the sparks of a cigarette destroyed 12 shops in Zin Paing Nyar Village in Maungtaw on Sunday.

The incident reportedly occurred in the afternoon with the fire breaking out at the petrol shop owned by Sultan Hussein,

25, living in Doe Tan Village. The fire quickly flared out of control and spread to the shops nearby. The fire destroyed a total of 12 shops with losses amounting to Ks240,000. The police have filed charges against Sultan Hussein.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Maungtaw villager missing

A local resident named Mammad Tarlaung (alias) Zaw Hlaing, 42, living in Kyain Chaung Taung village, Maungtaw Township, disappeared on the morning of 16 April, it is learnt.

Mammad Tarlaung who is engaged in the construction sector, was abducted by a group of men while crossing Jet Chaung village at 8:20 am. He did not

return home.

This prompted local border guard police force to search for him in Laung Don, Zaytipyin, Sinthaypyin, Ngasarkyu, Pan Myaung, Jet Chaung and Mh-yarsin villages and inspect the household lists in the villages, but their search was fruitless.

Police have taken action in accordance with the law.—*Myanmar News Agency*

Murder victim's kin: 'Our hearts are broken'

Mark Angeles

THE siblings of the British man murdered in Yangon last year said they will not cease pleading for the public's help or pressuring authorities until the killer of their brother is brought to justice.

Gary Ferguson, 47, was found dead in a Yangon apartment with head and chest wounds on 6 November.

Myanmar police said Harris Binotti, of Scotland, has not been seen since he and Mr. Ferguson had been drinking together three nights previously on 3 November at the Uptown Hotel on Shukhintar Street in Tharkayta Township. Neighbours reported hearing sounds of a fight among two men and a woman between midnight and 4:30am on 4 November from Binotti's downtown apartment.

Five months after Mr. Ferguson's death, with reports that Binotti, 26, may be in Thailand or another nearby country in Southeast Asia, apparently no progress has been made in apprehending the suspect.

"Our hearts are broken," said Donna Ferguson, Mr. Ferguson's sister, said yesterday. "But we will never give up."

Interpol, the global police or-



Murder suspect Harris Binotti

ganisation that facilitates cooperation among international law enforcement agencies, has recently joined in the hunt for Binotti, the prime suspect in the case.

The 26-year-old is understood to have left Myanmar hours after the death of Mr. Ferguson. Myanmar officials previously confirmed that Binotti left on a 4:30pm Thai Airways flight on 5 November to Bangkok.

Interpol has issued an international "red notice" alerting police forces around the world that Mr Binotti is wanted for extradition.

The notice, which makes the manhunt for the suspect a truly international, coordinated effort, states that Harris Binotti faces a charge of murder and describes him as 1.68m (5ft 5in), with brown hair and blue eyes.

"Red notices" are issued to international police forces when the suspect is wanted for prosecution or to serve a sentence based on an arrest warrant or court decision.

Mr. Ferguson's brother Martin said the family was relieved that the red notice had finally been issued.

"We waited for five months to get this notice, and now we hope for a swift end to this horrible event," said Martin Ferguson yesterday. "We want to thank the Myanmar authorities for getting this red notice, although slow, we are still relieved it has been issued."

Martin Ferguson said the past five months has given the suspect time to establish ways to stay underground.

"The suspect will of course have had a lot of time to think about his plan to stay out of justice's hands and to make up a sto-



Murder victim Gary Ferguson, left, with wife Supatchaya Sichompor, centre, and four-year-old son Jeremy.

ry that will help him when he is arrested", Martin Ferguson said. "We would also like to state that we are not happy that the suspect's girlfriend was allowed to travel from Myanmar as she is the only one who could have saved my brother. Therefore, we want Elsie Devolder to also be marked as a suspect or accessory to murder."

Neighbours of Binotti in Kyauktada told reporters in November that a loud ruckus could be heard in the early morning hours of 4 November involving two men and a woman.

"At that time we were sleeping, someone was smashing the

walls, smashing the floors," a neighbor said. "At around 4.30am we didn't hear anything."

They said Binotti and his girlfriend, named by police as Elsie Devolder, had rented the apartment for several months, mostly leaving for work in the early morning and returning late at night.

Elsie Devolder did not travel to Bangkok on 5 November with Binotti, authorities said, but left Yangon at a later date. Binotti may still be in Southeast Asia, possibly with Devolder, sources said.

Gary Ferguson, originally from Bangor, Northern Ireland,

and Harris Binotti, of Dumfries, Scotland, both taught English at the Horizon International School in Yangon. Binotti's girlfriend was also a teacher.

Mr. Ferguson had worked at the Horizon International School since 2013, while Mr Binotti had been there for about three months.

Mr. Ferguson leaves behind a wife, Supatchaya Sichompor, and a four-year-old son Jeremy.

"We just want Myanmar to know that a great person was murdered", Martin Ferguson said. "A good father who is not anymore able to provide for his son and his wife. They are left to the mercy of the world."