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Driver of UUM bus surrenders

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BY EMBUN MAJID

ALOR STAR: The driver of a Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM) shuttle bus who "went missing" after the overloaded vehicle plunged into a river, has surrendered himself to the police.

Kubang Pasu acting OCPD Asst Supt Harison Othman said the 29-year-old man turned up at the Jitra police station at about 7pm on Monday, some three hours after the incident.

He said police had recorded his statement, adding that the case was being investigated under Section 43(1) of the Road Transport Act 1987 for reckless driving.

ASP Harison said the man, from Padang Sira near Jitra, could be fined RM10,000 or jailed a year or both if found guilty.

"He has been released on bail. We will charge him if there is proof that he drove recklessly," he said yesterday.

In the incident at 4.20pm on Monday, 52 UUM undergraduates were injured after the 40-seater bus plunged down a 4m deep ravine, overturned and landed in a river near the UUM campus in Sintok.

The bus was carrying 60 students.

Norhafizah Che Noh from Pasir Mas, Kelantan, and Norhafizan Ismail from Kuala Terengganu, both 22, and Ng Xee Ming, 21, from Jerantut, Pahang, are still being warded at the Alor Star Hospital.

Norhafizah fractured her right arm while the other two were suspected to have injured their backbones.

The other injured victims had received outpatient treatment at the UUM clinic after the incident.

The bus was travelling from the campus to the Bukit Kachi residential college about 4km away.

In a related development, UUM has imposed a 'no-standing' ruling for all its 34 shuttle buses with immediate effect.

UUM Student Affairs Department director Mohd Zaini Nasri said all passengers must be seated at all times to prevent a recurrence of the accident.

In the Monday incident, some students were standing in the bus and one of them had lost her balance and fell on the driver who then lost control of the vehicle.