UPSIDE DOWN: Rescue workers looking for trapped passengers in the bus which landed in a river after the accident yesterday.

Overloaded bus crashes

NST 6/9/05 4:2

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SINTOK, Mon. — An overloaded Universiti Utara Malaysia bus today overturned and plunged into a river after a passenger apparently fell onto the steering wheel.

Five people were seriously injured and 47 others were given outpatient treatment at the UUM medical centre after the 4.20pm accident.

The five seriously injured undergraduates were admitted to the Alor Star Hospital.

Police are looking for the bus driver, who is believed to have left after treatment.

The bus was on the way to residential colleges in Bukit Kachi when the accident occurred.

It is understood that the bus carrying 63 passengers, 20 more than the maximum allowed, veered into the river after the driver lost control of the vehicle.

Kubang Pasu district acting police chief Assistant Superintendant Harison Othman said the incident occurred as the bus was negotiating a corner.

He said police wanted to interview the driver regarding the accident.

Passenger Zuraida Ismail, 23, said most of the students crawled out of the bus through the shattered windows.

"Some people who happened to be nearby helped us get out," said the social work studies major.

Goh Li Xian, 21, an accountancy major who escaped with a bruise on her head, said some students were nearly crushed as they fell on top of each other.

UUM student affairs department director Mohd Zaini Nasri said the university had informed the parents of all the affected undergraduates.

"We have sent the students to their colleges and exempted them from the mid-semester exams."

UUM has 34 buses that ferry students between lecture halls and the hostels.

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