

Beat: Miscellaneous

Bus plunges off bridge in northern Thailand, killing 29

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USPA News - A speeding passenger bus crashed through a guardrail Thursday and plunged off a bridge in northern Thailand, killing 29 people and seriously injuring the four survivors, police said on Friday. It is believed the driver of the bus may have fallen asleep.

The accident occurred at approximately 11 p.m. local time on Thursday, just one hour before the start of the so-called `seven dangerous days` of the year when millions of Thai hit the roads to visit relatives in their home provinces or to go on a vacation. It happened on a bridge in the northern province of Phetchabun. A district police officer said the bus, which belonged to the Sombat Tour Company and was traveling from the city of Khon Kaen to Chiang Rai, was traveling at a high rate of speed just before the accident. "It hit the barriers of the bridge several times and then crashed through the guardrail, falling more than 50 meters (165 feet)," the officer said. More than 150 rescue workers were involved in the rescue operation that was hampered by the difficult terrain surrounding the bridge, but only five survivors were found. "Recovered bodies total 28 and five survivors were shifted to hospital in critical conditions, where one of them tragically died," the officer said. Investigators said the bus driver likely fell asleep, but reckless driving was also being considered as a possible cause. Roads in Thailand are known to be among the most dangerous in the world with more than 26,300 fatalities in 2010, according to the World Health Organization (WHO) that puts the number of road deaths at 38.1 per 100,000 citizens. At least 365 people were reported killed in traffic accidents across the country during the `seven dangerous days` of the 2012-2013 holiday period.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

UPA United Press Agency LTD
483 Green Lanes
UK, London N13NV 4BS
contact (at) unitedpressagency.com
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