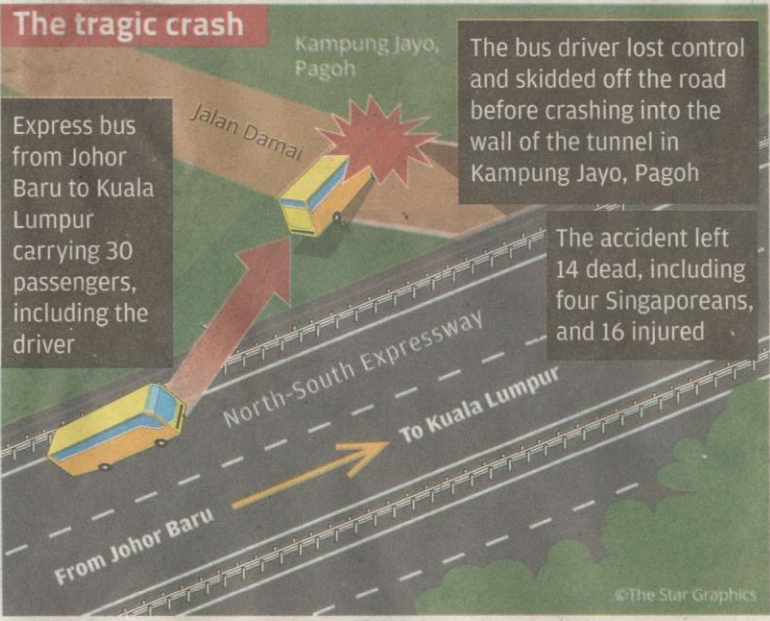


Reports by ZAZALI MUSA, YEE XIANG YUN, NABILA AHMAD and ROYCE TAN

Xmas eve trip ends in tragedy

Sunday Star
25/12/16
nl5-8 nation



Tragic scene: The destroyed bus lying near the underpass in Kampung Jayo near Pagoh, Johor.

Baby among 14 killed in horrifying bus crash at Pagoh

MUAR: What was supposed to be a night trip from Johor Baru to Kuala Lumpur during the Christmas break turned into a horrifying tragedy for 30 passengers when their bus plunged at high speed into a ravine near Kampung Jayo, Pagoh at the North-South Expressway.

Fourteen of them, including a baby, were killed, and the rest suffered injuries.

A witness reportedly heard screams of people and a loud bang before realising that the bus had crashed.

Villagers, awakened by the noise, rushed to help and found the passengers either dead or injured.

Police said the express bus was travelling at high speed before it plunged down 10m off the highway at 3.45am yesterday.

Muar OCPD Asst Comm Azman

Ayob said the bus that was heading to Kuala Lumpur from Johor Baru, veered off the highway and plummeted straight onto a concrete tunnel.

Thirteen people died on the spot while another victim was pronounced dead at the Sultanah Fatimah Specialist Hospital. Sixteen other passengers were injured.

Seven of the dead were women.

The witness, Ahmad Fahmi Khairuddin, could still remember the sound of screaming passengers on board the bus.

The 19-year-old vocational college student was sitting outside his house when the accident took place.

He said he was playing a round of a board game with three friends when he said he heard a loud crash some 100m from his house.

"We went over to take a closer

look. It was pitch black at the time. "I remember hearing screams for help and people crying in pain. I don't think I can ever forget that sound," he said when met at the scene yesterday.

Ahmad Fahmi said he ran home and alerted his sleeping father Khairuddin Abdullah, 49, who then telephoned emergency services.

Khairuddin, the Kampung Jayo village head, said that while waiting for the authorities to arrive, he called his brother and other villagers to help pull the passengers out of the bus.

"As it was very dark at the time, several villagers shone their motorcycle headlights towards the bus and we began helping the victims out of the bus, many of whom were bloodied and in pain," added Khairuddin.

He said the stretch of highway beside the kampung was accident prone but most of the accidents usually took place on the south-bound side.

Another villager Robiyah Tayeb, 48, a cook, had just come home from the Pagoh RnR stop where she works and was resting in the living room when she heard the commotion outside.

"As I went near the ruined bus, I saw that a body had been flung out of the vehicle.

"I could hear people moaning in pain.

"Although it was difficult because some of the bus seats had been displaced, I managed to help pull out a woman and a man from the bus," she said.

Johor Islamic Committee chairman Abdul Mutalip Abdul Rahim,

who represented Menteri Besar Datuk Mohamed Khaled Nordin, conveyed the state government's condolences to the families of the victims.

"The state government will assist the families of those involved and help to transport the bodies home for funeral.

Speaking at the Sultanah Fatimah Specialist Hospital here, Abd Mutalip said the authorities were still in the process of identifying the victims.

"The state government will also work closely with Singapore to identify its citizens and provide any assistance needed," he said.

Watch the video
thestartv.com



Sorrowful ending: Keseven and fiancée Renugah in happier times. Renugah died in the accident.



Heartbreaking news: Laila Kasdi (left), mother of Nur Saidatul and Jamiah Saiman, mother of Nur Amira, crying as they are consoled by a relative at the Forensic Unit of Sultanah Fatimah Specialist Hospital in Muar.