

Beat: Miscellaneous

School bus falls off cliff in central China, killing 4

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USPA News - A school bus carrying nearly 50 people fell off a cliff in central China on late Thursday afternoon, killing four people and injuring more than 40 others, state-run media reported on Friday. The cause has been blamed on a brake malfunction or poor driving.

The accident happened at around 5:50 p.m. local time on Thursday when the bus, which was carrying 46 students and one teacher from the Hunan Daoxian County Junior Normal College, fell off a 30-meter (98-foot) high cliff in Yongzhou, a city located in China's central province of Hunan. The accident took place as the bus was traveling from Daoxian County to Yongzhou where the students were to take part in an exam, according to the state-run Xinhua news agency. It said the vehicle fell off the cliff and photos from the scene showed the bus ended upside down at the bottom of the slope. Xinhua, quoting local authorities, said two people died at the scene of the accident while two others later succumbed to their injuries at a local hospital. All the survivors were also injured and rushed to a hospital affiliated with the Yongzhou Vocational Technical College. Eight survivors were initially in a critical condition but their condition later improved. In addition to the driver, a total of 46 students and one teacher were traveling in the bus at the time of the accident. They were heading to Yongzhou to take a scheduled higher education self-study exam. More than 170 students and four teachers in four different buses were making the trip, Xinhua said, adding that the other three buses arrived safely. Authorities have launched an investigation into the cause of the accident, but police said either a brake malfunction or poor driving is to blame. The 42-year-old bus driver, identified only as Zeng, was one of the eight people who had initially been in a critical condition and remains hospitalized under police custody. Roads in China are known to be among the most dangerous in the world with more than 70,000 fatalities and 300,000 injuries a year, according to the country's Public Security Ministry. Many accidents are the result of drivers violating traffic laws, fatigue, poor road conditions and overloaded vehicles. Earlier this month, five German nationals were among six people killed when a tourist bus crashed into a container truck and caught fire while driving on a Beijing-Shanghai expressway. In addition to the fatalities, state-run media said fourteen others were injured, including twelve Germans and two Chinese. On August 26, a double-decker sleeper bus slammed into the back of a truck carrying highly flammable methanol on the Baotou-Maoming expressway near Yan'an, a prefecture-level city in the Shanbei region of Shaanxi province. The accident killed 36 people and only 3 people survived.

Article online:

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile

info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com