

Close shave for seven

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KOTA TINGGI: A bus driver and his six passengers had a rude shock when the road under their bus caved in, causing the bus to roll onto its side.

Bus driver R. Chandran, 29, said he was terrified and his first thought was for his passengers.

"They were all screaming in panic," he said, recalling the incident that occurred at around 5.50am yesterday along the 18th kilometre of the Johor Baru-Kota Tinggi road.

Chandran, who was heading to Kota Tinggi from Johor Baru, said the impact of the crash broke the side windows, throwing the only female passenger out of the bus.

"We were looking for her inside the bus, without knowing that she had been thrown out and had managed to scramble up to the road," he said.

Thankful that his passengers only sustained minor injuries, Chandran said this was his first accident.

"I knew that Kota Tinggi was badly flooded, but I never



LUCKY ESCAPE: The bus lying in a huge crater after the Johor Baru-Kota Tinggi road caved in under it early yesterday morning.

expected this," he said as he huddled under an umbrella and shivered in the rain when met at around 10am near his bus.

The hole resulting from the cave-in stretched across half the width of the road. Police closed the road and diverted

traffic.

Despite the heavy drizzle, curious passers-by stopped to gawk at the sight of the bus in

the massive depression.

Among those at the scene was bank officer Erwin Baharuddin, 31, who said he had to get to Kota Tinggi as his wife and child were stranded there.

"No matter what happens, I must get to Kota Tinggi," he said, adding that he might try to use the alternative Kulai road.

When contacted, state traffic commanding officer Deputy Supt T. Raveendran advised the public to avoid travelling to Kota Tinggi as Johor Baru-Kota Tinggi road had been declared unsafe.

"Until the relevant authorities can get the road repaired, no vehicles will be allowed to pass," he said, adding that the Kulai road should not be used unless one was very familiar with it.

He warned the public of the possibility of further damage to roads in the state because of the incessant rains.

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