

Beat: Travel

26 killed when bus plunges down ravine in southern Peru

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USPA News - At least 26 people, most of them mine workers, were killed Wednesday when a passenger bus plunged into a ravine in southern Peru, local authorities said Thursday. It follows another deadly bus accident in the country nearly three weeks ago.

The accident occurred on Wednesday morning, shortly after 6:30 a.m. local time, when the bus plunged approximately 120 meters (393 feet) down a ravine. It happened on the Arequipa-Puno highway in Yura district, which is located in the mountainous Quiscos sector in southern Arequipa province. A highway police official said the death toll had risen to 26 by Thursday morning, including 24 bodies which were recovered at the scene and two people who died while undergoing treatment at a local hospital. Around 30 other people were injured, some of whom remained in a critical condition. The interprovincial bus, operated by Andares, had left the district of Orcopampa in Castilla province at around 2 a.m. local time that morning and was heading to Arequipa, the country's second most populous city which is also known as White City. Most of the victims were believed to be mine workers. Some passengers said the bus was speeding when it went off the road, but investigators believe the bus driver may have fallen asleep. Residents said the curve at which the accident happened is locally known as "Curva del Diablo," meaning the "Devil's Curve," because of the dangerous situation and many accidents. The driver of the vehicle, identified as a 53-year-old man, survived the accident but his condition was not immediately known. Wednesday's accident follows a similar accident earlier this month. At least 15 people were killed on March 10 when an apparent mechanical failure caused a bus driver to lose control of his vehicle, causing it to drop 150 meters (492 feet) down a gorge on the Arequipa-Camana route in Arequipa province. Although the number of fatalities has dropped in recent years, road accidents remain common in Peru, killing thousands of people a year and injuring tens of thousands more. At least 2,514 people were killed as a result of road accidents in 2010, down from a reported 3,000 fatalities in 2009.

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