



Mining Accident News No.0932

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Monday 26 October 2009

Four killed in mine explosion in SW China

Extract from Xinhua, China

KUNMING, - Four workers were killed by poisonous fumes after a blast in a lead-zinc mine in southwest China's Yunnan Province Monday, said a local government official.

The accident occurred at 3:00 a.m. when explosives were used during the digging process in the mine at Xiaohe Township, Qiaojia County, said Yu Youqi, deputy head of the County government.

The four workers, who worked underground in the shaft, died of suffocation by the poisonous fumes, Yu said.

The workers were confirmed dead at 5:00 p.m. when their bodies were recovered, he said.

The mine is owned by Yunnan Haolong Industrial Group Co., Ltd.

Tuesday 27 October 2009

S.Africa: Harmony Says Two Miners Recovered Hurt from Target Mine Accident

Extract from Bloomberg.com

Harmony Gold Mining Ltd. said two miners who were trapped underground at its Target mine in South Africa's Free State after a fall of ground were recovered late yesterday.

While government safety inspectors visited the mine yesterday, Harmony is as yet unable to comment on production, spokeswoman Marian van der Walt said by mobile phone today.

All employees involved were accounted for at 20:00 last night.

The two rescued employees both sustained injuries and have been admitted to hospital. Their condition is stable.

Two employees died in yesterday's rockfall, the circumstances of which are being investigated both internally and in conjunction with the Safety Inspectorate of the Department of Mineral Resources. Production at the mine was stopped by management shortly after the rockfall. Measures are being taken, however, to ensure that the area in the main decline where the rockfall took place is secured and that working places are supported and made safe.

Harmony management extended its deepest condolences to the families, friends and colleagues of the men who died.

Rwanda miners rescued from collapsed mine: minister

Extract from Reuters Africa

Three Rwandan miners trapped underground since a gallery they were working in collapsed on Saturday have been rescued, the government said on Tuesday.

The miners at Nyakabingo near the capital Kigali were rescued on Monday by police, the local population and other miners who used equipment to move large rocks blocking the passage, Natural Resources Minister Vincent Karega said.

"They've been rescued...they were very tired, they have not eaten," Karega said, adding that two of the miners were under observation at a clinic but that there were no serious injuries.

"It was just an accident...they are operating a very old mine," he told Reuters.

Three miners had a week earlier been crushed to death in a cassiterite and coltan mine in Rutongo, northern Rwanda.

The small landlocked country's mineral sector represents its second largest foreign exchange earner after tourism, bringing in \$91.3 million in 2008, according to central bank statistics.

"We will once again call for more serious social security safety measures and more education for the miners on how to rescue themselves when they are in danger," Karega said.

The Rwandan government and foreign companies are investing heavily in the mining sector, hitherto dominated by small-scale artisanal mining. Many mines have lain largely dormant since the end of Belgian colonial rule and are dangerous to rehabilitate.

One miner involved in the rescue efforts said he was concerned about the lack of safety features.

"I am so scared because I don't have enough safety training. We don't have anything for safety we just put on this helmet," he said.

UK: Coal production scaled down at Kellingley colliery after miner Ian Cameron is killed in accident

Extract from The Press, UK

COAL production at a colliery where dozens of people from York and Selby are employed has been scaled down following a fatal accident.

A spokesman for UK Coal, which runs Kellingley colliery, in Knottingley, said that, as a result of the incident, a "very limited" amount of coal was being produced there because the company was making changes to some valves that operate equipment on the coal face where the accident happened. Ian Cameron, 46, from Hemsworth, near Pontefract, is the second man to be killed in an accident there since September last year, when 50-year-old Brayton man Donald Cook died after becoming trapped by a roof fall.

The spokesman said of the latest accident: "It looks very much as if there's been a machinery malfunction, which unfortunately led to Mr Cameron being trapped and receiving injuries from which he died."

He said the mine, where between 70 and 80 people from the York and Selby areas work, had not been closed as a result of the incident and no one had been laid off.

He said the accident was being investigated by UK Coal management staff, the Health and Safety Executive and the mining trade unions.

He said the incident happened on October 18, when Mr Cameron was working as part of a team on the Silkstone Seam coal face.

He described him as a "very experienced" miner who had worked in the industry for 30 years, the last 21 of those at Kellingley colliery.

"The accident and his loss is being severely felt at Kellingley by his workmates, his family and his friends," he said.

He said it could be up to about two weeks before there was a return to normal levels of coal production at the site. Speaking about the changes UK Coal was making, he said: "That work is going to take about another week. While that work's taking place, other operations at the mine are continuing as normal."

Quote of the week



"To believe is to know you believe, and to know you believe is not to believe."

Jean-Paul Sartre,
(French philosopher 1905-1980)

USA: W.Va. records 3rd coal mining fatal

Extract from Associated Press, USA

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - The Office of Miners' Health Safety and Training reports that West Virginia has suffered its third coal mining fatality of the year.

Agency spokeswoman Jama Jarrett says the miner was killed Tuesday morning at Newtown Energy's Eagle Mine in Boone County.

Information about a second person involved in the accident was not immediately available.

Jarrett says the accident involved a hoist car, but other details were not immediately available.

The mine employs about 220 people and produces about 1 million tons of coal a year.

Company officials could not be immediately reached for comment.

According to the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration's Web site, Tuesday's fatality would be the nation's 14th coal mining death this year.

Wednesday 28 October 2009

UPDATE: One Killed, Two Injured in Boone County USA Mine Accident

Extract from wsaz.com

The Office of Miners' Health Safety and Training reports that West Virginia has suffered its third coal mining fatality of the year.

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - The Office of Miners' Health Safety and Training reports that West Virginia has suffered its third coal mining fatality of the year.

Agency spokeswoman Jama Jarrett says 53-year-old Charles Dixon of Fayette County was killed at about 7 a.m. Tuesday morning at Newtown Energy's Eagle Mine in Boone County. He had 25 years mining experience with six being at this mine in Comfort.

Two others, Daniel Ewing and Dave Morgan, were also injured in the accident and have been transported to a hospital -- one with facial injuries and the other with minor head injuries.

Jarrett says the accident involved a hoist car.

"Instead of elevator shafts, some mines, such as this one, have slope entrances and use cars to transport workers. These cars run on tracks and are operated by a hoist system," said Jarrett.

A news release from the mine states, "Dixon, affectionately called "Big Charlie" by his co-workers, was killed in a hoisting accident at Newtown Energy, Inc.'s, Eagle No. 1 Mine near Winifrede, Kanawha County, West Virginia. Mr. Dixon, a Fayette County man, was an experienced and trained miner, and worked as a trackman since 2003 at Newtown Energy, Inc. Mr. Dixon was 53 years old and first obtained his miner's card in 1981."

The mine employs about 220 people and produces about 1 million tons of coal a year.

"We are deeply saddened by this loss. Our thoughts and prayers are with Mr. Dixon's family right now", said Bob Ellis, Newtown Energy, Inc.'s President.

Ellis says this was the first fatality at a Newtown Energy Inc. mine.

According to the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration's Web site, Tuesday's fatality would be the nation's 14th coal mining death this year.

Riversdale Suspended Operations at South African Shaft Yesterday, 1 Killed

Extract from Bloomberg.com

Riversdale Mining Ltd. said it suspended operations at a shaft at its Zululand Anthracite Colliery in South Africa yesterday after an underground methane explosion which killed one worker and injured two others.

Government safety inspectors have visited the accident scene, said Steve Thomas, finance director for South Africa, by phone from Johannesburg today.

Russia: 1 Killed in Accident at Mir Diamond Mine

Extract from www.diamondNe.ws, UK

At least 1 person was killed during a rock collapse at the Mir diamond mine in the Republic of Sakha (Yakutia), reports the local press.

The Mir diamond pipe is located on the left-hand bank of the Irelyakh River in the direct vicinity of the city of Mirny. During the initial phase of the Mir pipe exploration it was explored down to a depth of 600m. Later it was explored to a depth of 1,235m and the diamond reserves were appraised to the same depth. Since 1958 the Mir diamond deposit had been exploited by open pit mining. According to the original mine design the final depth of the pit should be 240m, but then the design depth of the mine was increased first up to 300m and later in 1972 to 455m. The mine recently moved to underground mining.

This week in mining accident history

29 October 1909

**Darren Pit, New Tredegar, Wales, UK
Underground Coal Mine**

Coal dust explosion

27 killed

Source: www.welshcoalmines.co.uk

Situated near Deri in the Darren valley it was sunk in 1868 by the Rhymney Iron Co. It had two shafts each, which reached the Brithdir house coal seam at 120 yards.

In 1908 there were 272 men employed.

On the 29th of October 1909, an explosion occurred here killing 27 men.

Until this date this mine was considered a safe mine and throughout its history it had been worked with naked lights.

It was about 4.00 am on a Friday with 50 night shift workers underground when the effects of the blast vented up the upcast shaft and shattered the pit head casing on which two men were standing, both were badly injured.

With the winding shaft rendered inoperable by the blast damage a carpenter William Evans bravely descended the ventilation pit by means of a ladder, which was attached to the side of this shaft. On reaching the bottom he discovered two injured men, he then climbed back to the surface to get help. Returning with

two others they managed to assist the injured up the precarious ascent to the surface.

The Darren was connected underground to Gilfach colliery and those that survived the explosion managed to make their way to the Gilfach shaft.



The Darran House Coal Pit, scene of a coal dust ignition/explosion on Friday 29 October 1909, when 27 men lost their lives. This photograph shows the scene at the pit-head as the crowd waits for news of survivors

It was down this shaft that a rescue party descended equipped with breathing apparatus unfortunately the capacity of their oxygen tanks proved to be inadequate and five of the rescue party were succumbed by the toxic gases.

In 1918 there were only 73 men employed.

It closed in 1919.

Thursday 29 October 2009

Ten suffocate in shuttered Chinese mine: govt

Extract from Press Trust of India

Beijing: Ten people have suffocated in a mine in northern China after illegally entering the facility, which was shut down a year ago, the nation's work safety watchdog said today.

The accident occurred Monday in Shanxi province's Datong city, according to a statement posted on the watchdog's website.

Two people survived the ordeal at the mine, which had been closed down in October 2008, the statement said, without providing further details.

The watchdog did not specify what type of mine it was, but Datong is located in prime coal mining country.

China's coal mines are among the most dangerous in the world, with safety standards often ignored in the quest for profits and the drive to meet surging demand for coal -- the source of about 70 per cent of China's energy.

WA: Verdict looms in mine death trial

Extract from ABC News online, Aus

A verdict in the trial of a Goldfields mining company, accused of failing to provide a safe working environment, is expected either tomorrow or next week.

Kalgoorlie Consolidated Gold Mines (KCGM) is on trial over the death of contractor Mathew Harris, 25, at the Super Pit in February 2006.

Mr Harris died after his utility crashed into the back of a parked truck carrying protruding drill rods - one of the rods smashed through his front windscreen.

The court will this morning hear closing submissions from the prosecution and KCGM's defence counsel.

USA: Coal miner says she was intentionally hurt

Extract from The Gillette News-Record, Wyoming

A Gillette woman who claims a co-worker used a crane to violently shake her haul truck is suing Rio Tinto Energy America for an unspecified amount in damages.

Lana Tegeler was seriously hurt in October 2008 while hauling large loads of coal from a mining pit at Cordero-Rojo mine.

In a lawsuit filed earlier this month, Tegeler alleges that Bill Bradley, a shovel operator, intentionally "bombed" her haul truck by dumping 80 tons of coal into her truck bed.

The coal was dumped from high above Tegeler's haul truck, causing the cab to violently shake and rattle. The lawsuit claims Bradley

then positioned the shovel inside Tegeler's truck bed and moved it from side to side, jostling the cab even more.

Bradley allegedly bombed Tegeler's haul truck again and again, taunting her over the company's two-way radio system.

"You want it rough? I'll give it to you rough," court documents quote Bradley as saying. "How do you like it? Rough? Here, have it rough!"

Tegeler severely hurt her head, neck, back and arm while being tossed inside the truck. Bombing was strictly prohibited by Rio Tinto, and Bradley was known to intentionally bomb haul truck operators, according to the lawsuit.

It wasn't clear what touched off the episode. Both Tegeler and Bradley declined to comment. The lawsuit claims Bradley had a "notorious reputation of impatience, loss of temper and mood swings."

Rio Tinto Energy, Bradley and company supervisors Kent Coulter and Scott Tutor were named as defendants. Tegeler is seeking punitive damages plus medical expenses, loss of earnings and damages for suffering and emotional distress.

Tegeler's attorney, Grant Lawson of the Spence Law Firm in Jackson, declined to comment. A spokeswoman for Rio Tinto Energy had no comment.

The case has been assigned to District Judge Dan R. Price II. A court hearing hasn't been scheduled yet.

Sunday 1 November 2009

Canada: Hopes dim for 3 miners

Extract from The Gazette, Montreal, Canada

Cage resurfaces empty. It will take 20 hours for workers to pump out flooded floors

Emergency workers started the painstaking 20-hour process of pumping out the bottom levels of a mine shaft in search of three miners who went missing late Friday night in Desmaraisville in the James Bay region.

But chances of finding the missing miners alive were slim last night. They were working to restore the abandoned Bachelor Lake gold mine, owned by Metanor Resources, about 600 kilometres north of Montreal.

La Farre resident Bruno Goulet, 36, Amos resident Dominico Bollini, 44, both Metanor employees, and Marc Guay, 31, an Amos resident and an employee of the mining contracting company Montali, were working to align the walls of the mine shaft about 11:30 p.m. Friday.

They were in a cage on the sixth level and communicated with the cage's operator at the surface level, to descend to the 12th level.

However, for some reason no one noticed that the 11th and 12th levels were flooded. Pierre Bernaquez, the superintendent of human resources, said alarms are supposed to sound if there is flooding.

Once the operator noticed there was a flood, he signalled the employees, but they didn't respond, so he brought the cage back up, but it was empty, and the door was open.

"We don't know what happened to them," Bernaquez said, his voice breaking. "We're still holding out hope that we will find them alive, but the chances that they were able to get out are slim."

Flooding isn't uncommon in a mine because there are fissures in the walls, Bernaquez explained.

"It's normal in a mine, but there are pumps to keep things dry."

He speculated that the miners may have been pushed out of the cage by the water pressure.

There are emergency exits on each level, but if the miners had found them they would have been discovered by now. Bernaquez said he hoped they found a dry refuge in the flood.

Mine operations have ceased since the employees went missing. Emergency workers

scoured the shaft in hopes of finding the workers.

Special pumps were brought in from Abitibi yesterday afternoon, but it will take until this afternoon to fully empty the shaft of water.

Last night, emergency workers skilled in exploring mines arrived at the site to continue the search. Quebec's workplace safety board, the Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail, was investigating the accident, as was Sûreté du Québec.

Monday 2 November 2009

USA: Woman Dies after Falling in Mine Shaft

Extract from TurnTo23.com

INYOKERN, Calif. -- A Ridgecrest woman is dead after falling 100 feet into a mine shaft that she was exploring.

In the Tungsten Peak Mine south of Bradys and northwest of Inyokern west of Highway 14 just south of the 395 junction.



Derelict Tungsten Peak Mine, Ca

The Indian Wells Mine Rescue Team was dispatched to the scene and worked with Kern County Fire crews to reach Linda Marie Rose, 30, of Ridgecrest, who was found dead from the fall by rescuers.

Rose fell about 100 feet down a vertical mine shaft around 2pm Sunday.

Rose's body was secured and removed using a technical rope recovering system.

There is no word on why Rose had decided to go into the mine to begin with. However it appears she was exploring the old workings.

S.Africa: Mine health needs to be improved: minister

Extract from Times Live, Zambia

South Africa has lost 143 miners to mining accidents in 2009, Minister of Mineral Resources Susan Shabangu said.

Falls of ground accidents were still the largest accident category and predominant cause of fatalities in the country's mines, the minister told the 120th annual general meeting of the Chamber of Mines.

Of the fatalities reported so far this year, 55 were as a result of the falls of ground accidents and 70 percent of these falls of ground accidents were due to gravity induced incidents.

"What is frustrating is the fact that all these accidents are 'repeat' in nature and by now we should have learned from previous cases," the minister said.

Both the Council for Geoscience and the Mine Health and Safety Council were working on a project to improve seismic network coverage and seismic data integration and transparency, she said.

However, more work needed to be done to reduce gravity-induced accidents because South Africa had the means and resources, Shabangu said.

Occupational health impacts were difficult to quantify since many health effects were not immediate, the minister said.

"Occupational lung diseases are a major cause of premature retirement and death at South African mines.

"Dust-related lung diseases such as silicosis overshadow mine accidents in numbers of workers affected."

The minister said that noise was one of the significant health hazards for workers in the South African mining industry.

"More emphasis and investment on matters of health is urgently needed to change the status quo at our mines," Shabangu said.

She added that tuberculosis, HIV and Aids could not be allowed to kill mine workers especially in times where measures were in place to fight the diseases.

"We have to redouble our efforts to improve the health of mineworkers," she said.

Tuesday 3 November 2009

S.Africa: Investigation underway into mineworker's death

Extract from Times Live, Zambia

An investigation is underway to determine what caused an accident that claimed the life of a mineworker at Gold Field's Kloof mine in Carletonville, the mining company says.

Spokesman Julian Gwillim said a mine inspector was underground at the Kloof mine to gather information on what could have led to the mineworker being struck and killed by a snatch block on Monday night.

He said the company was awaiting results from the investigation before it could take any action.

National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) spokesman Lesiba Seshoka said in a statement that the mineworker was working a night shift when he was killed.

The recent death took the number of mineworkers killed while on duty this year to 145, said Seshoka.

"NUM regrets the accident and calls on [the] mineral resources department to order shaft closure in terms of section 54 of the Mine Health and Safety Act," Seshoka said.

The union called on its members to observe a day of mourning in line with the organisation's resolution.

Seshoka said contrary to what many argue, death in the mining industry remained a corporate norm.

"Those who hint that the figures are down may never have gone through the pain of losing a loved one through deliberate acts of both ignorance and negligence," he said.

Thursday 5 November 2009

USA: 2 get prison, house arrest in fatal Pa. mine blast

Extract from The Associated Press

POTTSVILLE, Pa. - The operator of an eastern Pennsylvania coal mine has been sentenced to prison and the owner to house arrest in connection with a mine explosion that killed a man three years ago.

Fifty-three-year-old David Zimmerman and his son, 34-year-old Steven Zimmerman, both pleaded no contest to involuntary manslaughter last month. They were charged in the death of 43-year-old Dale Reightler of Donaldson, who died in a methane blast in October 2006.

The defendants also pleaded guilty to recklessly endangering another person and three violations of the Anthracite Coal Mining Act.

Judge Jacqueline Russell sentenced Steven Zimmerman to three to 23 months in prison and David Zimmerman to six months of house arrest.

State prosecutors called the case the first successful manslaughter prosecution in a mining death in the commonwealth.

The defendants said nothing during Wednesday's hearing, but Assistant Public Defender Lora McDonald, Steven Zimmerman's lawyer, said her client is remorseful.

Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

S

slimes Finely-divided tailings resulting from the crushing process, which remain in suspension in water for a long period.

- Ed.