

Mining Accident News No.0908

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Tuesday 3 March 2009

DR Congo: Katanga Mining Says Two Miners Killed in Accidents

Extract from Bloomberg.com, South Africa

Katanga Mining Ltd. said two miners died in separate accidents at its underground mine in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The employees were killed on Feb. 27 and March 1, Katanga said late yesterday from London in an e-mailed response to questions.

“Extensive accident investigations, involving both our internal safety personnel and local government officials, are presently underway to understand every aspect of these incidents and to identify and implement measures to prevent any reoccurrence,” it said. “While these investigations are carried out the decision has

been made that it is safe to continue mining operations.”

Katanga operates the Kamoto underground mine and the open-pit KOV mine on the outskirts of Kolwezi, a town 250 kilometres (155 miles) north-west of Lubumbashi, the capital of the southern Katanga province. The Central African nation holds a third of the world’s cobalt reserves and 4 percent of all copper.

Colleagues and family members yesterday held Katanga’s legal advisor and union leader hostage to demand compensation from the company, according to Kolwezi Mayor Charlotte Cume Jinga.

“They were held hostage, because the families wanted a guarantee from the company that it would fill the spots with family members and would pay compensation,” Cume Jinga said today on the phone from the town.

Hostages Freed

The hostages were released after Katanga agreed to employ members of the same family and advised the families they would be compensated in line with the company’s code, Cume Jinga said.

Katanga didn’t respond to questions about the representatives who were taken hostage and didn’t provide details about the deaths of the employees.

One of miners who died, Nama Mutshaila, was killed after rocks fell from the mine’s roof, his father, Mutshaila Kalenga, said yesterday on the phone from Kolwezi. The second worker, Alain Kalenga, was crushed in an underground landslide on March 1, his brother, Duran Ilunga, said in a phone interview from the town.

Most workers didn’t work yesterday and on March 1, Cume Jinga said. She couldn’t say whether production was affected by the stoppage.

Thursday 5 March 2009

Pakistan: 14 dead, 19 hurt in Sorenj coal mine blast

Extract from Associated Press of Pakistan

QUETTA: Rescue operations ended after searchers retrieved 14 dead bodies from the coal mine which collapsed partially due to a huge blast here at Sorenj area of the district, SHO Sorenj Tariq told media persons Thursday.

The rescue teams also brought to the surface 19 injured miners who were admitted to the Bolan Medical College Hospital for treatment.

“Some of the miners died of suffocation while the rest were burnt to death when a powerful blast caused by some poisonous gas ripped through the 1800 feet deep seam” said Dr. Abdul Wahab after examining the dead and wounded miners.

Those who lost lives in the incidents were identified as Mir Hashim, Muhammad Alam, Wali Muhammad, Nurrudin, Abdul Wahab, Roshanzada, Qudrat Gul, Muhammad Salim, Bakhti Hamid, Gul Hadi, Nasim Gul, Muhammad Hussein, Anwar and Mir Hijan.

Out of the total dead, 12 miners are from Shangla, Swat district while the remaining two belong to Balochistan.

The coalmine was owned by Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC).

The Mines department authorities are investigating the incident.

9 miners injured in methane gas blast in Turkey

Extract from International Herald Tribune, France

ANKARA, Turkey: A local official says a methane gas explosion injured nine workers in a coal mine in western Turkey.

Ibrahim Kucuk, local governor of the western town of Dursunbey, says the miners sustained severe burns during Thursday's gas explosion at some 280 meters (900 feet) below the

surface at a mine shaft in Dursunbey in the province of Balikesir.

Kucuk says all miners have been evacuated and hospitalized.

Accidents in Turkey's mines are not uncommon due to safety violations, outdated equipment and high concentrations of methane gas.

Liberia: Several Crushed in Nimba Mine Accident

Sourced from www.liberianobserver.com

NIMBA COUNTY, At least four people were reportedly trapped underground and crushed to death at an alluvial mining site in Bahn, Nimba County.

Eyewitnesses' reports indicate that those killed remained buried under heavy earth, following a landslide as they carried out underground mining.

However, the local mining agent in Bahn, Tala Sumo, when contacted by this reporter, claimed that only one death had been reported as a result of the weekend accident.

Quote of the week

A politician needs the ability to foretell what is going to happen tomorrow, next week, next month and next year. And to have the ability afterwards to explain why it didn't happen.

Sir Winston Churchill

Friday 6 March 2009

USA: Worker killed in DeSoto mine accident

Extract from KTBS, Shreveport, LA, USA

A worker at a lignite mine in DeSoto Parish was killed today in an accident involving a piece of equipment.

The DeSoto Parish Sheriff's Office said the accident happened about 8:30 Friday morning at the Dolet Hills Lignite Mine, which sits just east of Mansfield.

A SWEPCO spokesman said the employee was killed while working with a dragline. First reports are that he became entangled in the tracks of the dragline. The dragline is used to remove the soil that sits on top of the lignite deposits.

An internal investigation on the accident is underway. The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MHSa), the federal agency that oversees mining operations, is also investigating.

The sheriff's office has not released the name of the employee nor how he died, but they have notified his wife of the accident.

Saturday 7 February 2009

Two Miners Dead, Two Missing in N. China Colliery Blasts

Extract from CRIENGLISH.com, Beijing, China

Two miners were dead and another two were still missing after explosions ripped through a coal mine in north China's Hebei Province, local rescue officials said early Saturday.

The accident took place at about 6 a.m. at two shafts of the Jinming Coal Mine in Wu'an City when 28 miners were working underground, the rescue headquarters said after further verification.

Fourteen miners managed to get out themselves and another 10 were rescued on Friday evening, rescuers said.

More than 200 rescuers were working in turns to break through the collapsed tunnel to search for the missing workers.

Police have cordoned off the area, and medical workers and ambulances are standing by near the pit entrance for emergency treatment.

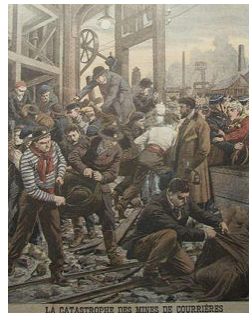
The mine has legal production permits, but its operation was suspended pending a restructuring of small coal mine companies.

The head of the coal mine and an unspecified number of other administration staff are being questioned by police.

Local authorities are investigating the cause of the accident.

This week in mining accident history

Date Mine / Country (Aust unless stated)	Victim / Incident
10 March 1906 Courrieres Mine Underground coal mine Lens, France <i>Source: Wikipedia</i>	<p>The Courrières mine disaster, Europe's worst mining accident, caused the death of 1,099 miners (including many children) in Northern France. A dust explosion, the cause of which is not known with certainty, devastated a coal mine operated by the Compagnie des mines de houille de Courrières (founded in 1852) about two kilometres (one mile) to the east of Lens, in the Pas-de-Calais département (about 220 km, north of Paris).</p> <p>A large explosion was heard shortly after 6:30am on the Saturday morning. An elevator cage at Shaft 3 was thrown to the surface, damaging pit-head workings; windows and roofs were blown out on the surface at Shaft 4; an elevator cage raised at Shaft 2 contained only dead and unconscious miners.</p> <p>It has never been ascertained what caused the initial ignition of the coal dust. Two main hypotheses have been put forward:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ an accident in the handling of mining <u>explosives</u>; ▪ ignition of methane by the naked flame of a miner's lamp. <p>There is evidence to support either of these hypotheses.</p> <p>About six hundred miners were able to reach the surface in the hours that followed the explosion. Many were severely burned and/or suffering from the effects of mine gases.</p> <p>A group of thirteen survivors, later known as the <i>rescapés</i>, was found by rescuers on 30 March, twenty days after the explosion. A final survivor was found on 4 April.</p>



Le Petit Journal illustration of the Courrières mine disaster

Sunday 8 March 2009

Quecreek miners settle lawsuit 7 years after ordeal

Extract from Tribune Review, Pittsburgh, PA, USA

Pennsylvania, USA: More than 24 stories under the Somerset County hamlet of Quecreek, on July 24, 2002, nine trapped miners gathered in a tight pocket of a coal seam.

Gasping for diminishing air and fearing rising mine water would drown them before rescue; the men scribbled final words of love on scraps of cardboard, then sealed them in a lunch box. Seventy-seven hours after their ordeal began, they were rescued.

On Friday, less than seven years later, they signed a very different set of documents: They settled lawsuits against the Quecreek Mine, the company that ran it -- PBS Coals -- and the Musser Engineering firm that certified the maps used by the miners when they drilled into an abandoned section of a neighbouring coal seam, unleashing 72 million gallons of frigid water they never knew was there.

Eight of the nine Quecreek miners trapped underground -- foreman Randy Fogle, Dennis "Harpo" Hall, Blaine Mayhugh, Robert "Boogie" Pugh, Ronald "Hound Dog" Hileman, John "Flathead" Phillippi, John Unger and Tom "Tucker" Foy -- sued Quecreek, PBS Coals and Musser in 2003, alleging that the corporations negligently set them up to die by giving them outdated and uncertified charts.

Under the terms of the settlement, the monetary award to the miners remains confidential, and the companies will not admit to any negligence.

A four-inch-thick binder stands out from the 29 feet of material compiled by their Downtown attorney, Howard Messer -- constituting 10,000 pages of depositions and 15,000 sheets of exhibits for a trial that could have kicked off during the summer. The binder contains the original shreds of cardboard bearing what the

trapped miners assumed would be their final good-byes.

Blaine Mayhugh penned two letters to his wife, Leslie. One was written at 2 a.m., July 25, 2002, about five hours after the inundation began, and Mayhugh says that it was "getting harder to breathe" and that they "tried every way out," without luck.

The second letter says simply that the "time is near. I love you and the kids. Always remember the good times. Love, Blaine."

John Phillippi scribbled his name across a square, his fingerprints still smudged black with soot across the brown cardboard. He wrote to his wife, Missy, and son, Chris: "Take Care. Love you forever."

Robert Pugh scrawled a note to his long-time girlfriend, Cindy. "Tell my family I love you all," he wrote before signing off "Boog."

Dennis Hall wrote to his daughter and children, "I love you more than ever. Hope I see you in Heaven."

Signing off as "Pap," Tom Foy let his family know that he loved them.

"The miners are very happy that this matter is over. It's been a long, difficult fight for them to get justice. They're very happy with the results," said Messer, who represented the trapped miners.

Fogle returned to work underground with PBS Coals, now part of a Russian mining conglomerate. The rest said the mental trauma of nearly dying kept them from re-entering Somerset County's rich seams.

A second group of miners who narrowly escaped entrapment and made it to safety -- Frank Stewart, Barry Carlson, Douglas Custer, David Petree, Ryan Petree and Lawrence Summerville -- also sued the companies and will share in the settlement.

"They're glad to put this long nightmare behind them," said Philadelphia attorney Sayde Ladov,

who represented all of the second group except Stewart.

"Your readers should know that the Quecreek miners, all of them, are salt-of-the-earth individuals. If they had problems or were ill, these hearty souls would cure themselves. But their nightmares, cold sweats, constantly reliving the accident -- that speaks volumes about the trauma they experienced. Whenever there's a mining disaster, either here or overseas, they relive that trauma," Ladov said.

"They're pleased with the monetary settlement, but the fact that they filed the lawsuit in the first place was important. That helped to spur new regulations that further protect the lives of all miners."

Attorneys representing Quecreek and PBS Coals declined to return messages left for them. Musser Engineering officers also declined to comment.

A separate decision of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission on Nov. 3 determined that the companies engaged in a "very high level of negligence" by providing incorrect mine maps to the miners and state and federal regulators, according to the written opinion of Chief Administrative Law Judge Robert J. Lesnick.

Lesnick concluded the companies had played "Russian roulette" with the miners' lives.

The companies are appealing a \$55,000 fine, the maximum allowed by law.

Monday 9 March 2009

Five suffocate in gold mine in east China's Anhui

Extract from Xinhua, China

HEFEI -- Five people died in a mine accident in east China's Anhui Province Sunday afternoon, local authorities said Monday.

The accident happened at about 3 p.m. at the facility of Maijie Mining Co. Ltd. in Dongzhi County, Chizhou City, as six maintenance staff

were working underground, a municipal information office official said.

The accident happened after four workers went in search of a man who had gone to use the toilet in a shaft but did not return for a long time. The official said that for unknown reasons, there was a shortage of oxygen in that part of the facility and all the five suffocated to death.

The surviving worker was rescued after calling for help, he said.

The workers were all local farmers.

The mine owner was taken into police custody and the bank account of the mine was blocked, he said. An investigation into the cause is under way.

All mines in the county have been closed for inspection.

Tuesday 10 March 2009

Six miners dead in north China colliery gas poisoning

Extract from Xinhua, China

HOHHOT, -- Six miners died in hospital Tuesday morning after a gas poisoning at a colliery in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region Monday evening, local authorities said.

The accident happened at about 10:20 p.m. in Luxinju Coal Mine of Juneng Coal Mine Co. Ltd, Jungar Banner when six miners were poisoned by unknown gas, a banner government official said.

The first miner was rescued at 5:25 a.m. and the rest of them were pulled out of the pit at 6:15 a.m.. They were rushed to the hospital but died later, he said.

Luxinju Coal Mine is a licensed, private mine with a reserve of 19.87 million tonnes.

The cause of the accident is under investigation.

Worker killed in western Pa. coal mine accident

Extract from The Evening Sun, Hanover, PA, USA

DILLINER, Pa. - An autopsy is expected on the body of an electrical worker killed in a scissors lift accident at a western Pennsylvania coal mine.

State police say 41-year-old Richard Custer, of Eighty-Four, died Monday morning at the Poland Mine near Dunkard Creek in Dunkard Township, Greene County.

Police say Custer was on the scissors lift when a fork lift somehow tipped it over, throwing him to the ground.

Custer worked for T.P. Electric Inc., of Greensburg, where an employee says the company is investigating but otherwise not commenting Tuesday.

Custer died at Ruby Memorial Hospital in Morgantown, W.Va. The Monongalia County Medical Examiner in West Virginia is investigating.

Fatal accident in Polish coal mine

Extract from The News.pl, Poland

A coal miner has died in the Halemba-Wirek colliery in Ruda Slaska, southern Poland, the State Mining Authority has informed.



The accident occurred on Monday some 711 metres beneath ground level. While the miner, who was employed to lay and detonate explosive, was drilling a shot hole when a lump of rock came off the wall and crushed him.

Medical staff tried to resuscitation the man but to no avail.

The incident will be subject of an investigation by the State Mining Authority.

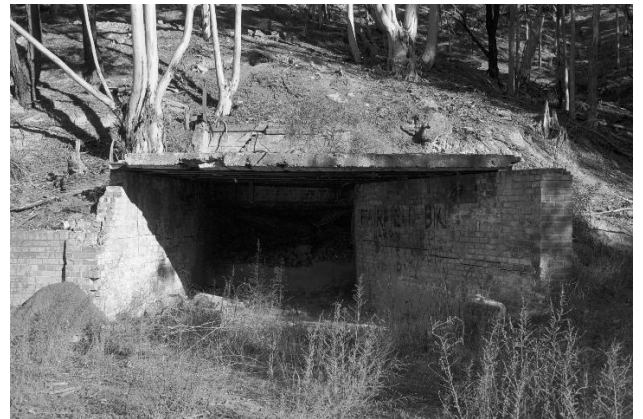
This is the fourth fatality in Polish coal mines this year. Twenty four people died in 2008.

Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

P

portal Surface entry to an adit or tunnel.



Portal of MP1 Shale Mine ruins, circa 2001
Prospecting tunnel first driven in 1888
Glen Davis, Capertee Valley, NSW

prop A wooden post or support used in a mine, such as to support the caps in a timbered drive.



Timber props under pressure
Coocoran opal fields, Lightning Ridge, NSW, circa 2001

- Ed.