

Mining Accident News No.0921

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Tuesday 30 June 2009

China: Coal mine accidents trap at least eight miners, rescue workers

Extract from Xinhua, China

URUMQI, - At least five rescue workers were trapped in a coal mine in northwest China's Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region Tuesday, together with three miners they were trying to save from a gas explosion earlier, official sources said.

Xinjiang coal mine safety bureau said a blast at 9 a.m. at Dihu coal mine, 40 km northeast of Shanshan County seat, trapped five miners inside the shaft.

Rescuers saved two of the five, but at least five of them were trapped in the mine when

another accident occurred, said sources with the bureau.

Rescue work continues.

Pakistan: Five killed, five injured in Coal mine blast

Associated Press of Pakistan

MANSEHRA: At least five laborers were killed and five others injured in a Coal mine blast which took place at Jabri Kalash, a village of Balakot on Tuesday. According to police sources, some laborers were working at Coal mine when the blast occurred, resulted killing five men working at Coal mine on the spot, while the similar number of laborers sustained injuries.

The injured were shifted to Ayub Medical Complex Abbottabad.

Those killed in the incident were identified as Chamnay Khan, Ahmed Yar Khan, Abid Karim, Amna Khan, and Abdul Aleem.

The injured include Roman Khan, Gull Zaman, Salamat Khan, Rasool and Noor Gull.

Police have registered the case on the complaint of contractor M.Iqbal Khan and started further investigation.

WA: Inspector to examine mine rockfall

Extract from ABC Online, Aus

A government inspector is being sent to BHP Billiton's Leinster nickel mine in the WA Goldfields after two rockfalls in three weeks.

A miner was trapped and another injured during a rock collapse at the mine on Monday night.

It is the same mine where a worker was trapped after a rockfall three weeks ago.

BHP says an earth tremor measuring 2.3 on the Richter scale caused the collapse last night.



BHP Billiton's Perseverance Nickel mine at Leinster

One worker was trapped for two hours while another received minor injuries.

Operations have been suspended at the site and an inspector from the Department of Mines and Petroleum is being sent to the region.

The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union has accused BHP Billiton of trying to cover up the incident, saying workers were told this morning not to tell anybody about the collapse.

The union has renewed calls for a federal parliamentary inquiry into mine safety.

Wednesday 1 July 2009

WA: Rockfalls 'could force BHP mine closure'

Extract from ABC Online, Aus

The West Australian Government is investigating whether part of BHP Billiton's Leinster operations should be closed, after a second rockfall at the site in three weeks.

One worker was injured and another ordered to stay underground for two hours after an earth tremor triggered the collapse at BHP's Perseverance nickel mine on Monday night.

It is the same mine where a worker was trapped for 16 hours because of a rockfall three weeks ago.

The Minister for Mines, Norman Moore, says he is very concerned about BHP's safety record and has launched an investigation into whether the operation should be closed down.

"I've asked the State Mining Engineer whether there are any other measures we should be taking immediately," he said.

Mr Moore says a prohibition notice, preventing BHP from operating the affected part of the site, will remain in place until he receives the engineer's advice.

"We're not satisfied with the level of performance in terms of safety that's happening at this particular mine," he said.

"We'll be taking a very long and hard look at the two incidents, which have happened in recent times, and we'll be getting advice from the State Mining Engineer about whether the mine should remain open."

In a statement, BHP said operations close to the rockfall remain suspended but operations have resumed in other parts of the mine.

The company described seismic events as a "common occurrence" in deep underground mines but said this was an "unusually high" magnitude event.

BHP says the latest rockfall occurred in a different area of the mine to that affected by the mine collapse last month.

USA: Dead worker's widow settles lawsuit against Iron Range mine

Extract from Duluth News Tribune, Minnesota, USA

A wrongful death lawsuit filed by the family of a United Taconite Co. employee killed on the job has been settled out of court for an undisclosed sum.

A wrongful death lawsuit filed by the family of a United Taconite Co. employee killed on the job has been settled out of court for an undisclosed sum.

But legal suits and countersuits still swirl around the death of Deane Driscoll of Eveleth, who was killed in February 2008

when a drilling rig he was operating overturned.

Those remaining claims involve United Taconite, drill manufacturer Atlas Copco and Standard Hardware, the supplier of bolts that allegedly failed in the deadly accident.

On June 9, however, the primary plaintiff in the case settled out of court.

"The settlement brings some closure to Nancy Driscoll, so she can go on with her life without the specter of litigation, appeals, etc., looming ominously ahead of her," said Edward Matonich, the Hibbing attorney who represented Driscoll's widow in the suit.

Dan Poretti, an attorney for Atlas Copco, said he also views the settlement as a positive outcome.

"I think Atlas Copco always wanted to reach a settlement with the Driscoll family," he said. "The company was regretful of the loss and has extended its condolences to the family."

Tom Thibodeau, a Duluth attorney who represents Standard Hardware, said the key question in the ongoing case is what will become of United Taconite's counterclaim against Atlas Copco. The mining company had been seeking reimbursement for the allegedly defective drill and lost production, as a result of the accident. But a district court judge has dismissed these claims, leaving the company only to pursue a reimbursement from Atlas of workers compensation payments it made to Driscoll's family after his fatal injury.

Poretti said Cliffs has indicated it intends to appeal the district court decision. Such an appeal could easily take nine months to be heard.

Rich Bidell, an attorney for Cliffs Natural Resources, which owns United Taconite, declined comment Tuesday, saying he would not discuss pending litigation.

For its part, Atlas Copco has filed a countersuit against Standard Hardware, but Poretti said the involved parties probably will hold off until any appeal from Cliffs is resolved.

QLD: Mine death sparks safety rethink

Extract from ABC Online, Aus

A fatal mine accident in north-west Queensland earlier this year has prompted the State Government to release a series of recommendations to ensure the safety of workers.

Pekka Tuppurainen, 50, died in late May at Xstrata's George Fisher mine near Mt Isa. He was operating a loader when the machine fell into a 20 metre hole.

Nine safety recommendations based on the incident have been released by the Department of Mines and Energy.

They include site inspections and risk assessments to be carried out before starting work, ensuring that pit edges are stable and marked with lights, and using stop logs along the pit.

An inquiry into the accident is still underway.

A report by the Mines Inspectorate says four people died during preventable accidents at Queensland mines in the last financial year.

Thursday 2 July 2009

277 miners die in S.Africa in past year

Extract from Reuters

CAPE TOWN, - Some 277 workers have died in South African mines in the past year, almost half of them in illegal operations, Mineral Resources Minister Susan Shabangu said on Thursday.

"The number of deaths due to mining incidents for the period of June 1, 2008 to June 1, 2009 were 142 deaths of miners

lawfully employed (and) 135 deaths of illegal miners," Shabangu said in a written reply to a question in parliament.

South Africa, which has the world's deepest mines, has one of the highest rates of work-related mining deaths in the industrialised world.

Shabangu gave no comparable figures for the same period the previous year. For the whole of last year 168 workers died in legal operations, down 24 percent from 2007 when 221 fatalities were reported, according to data.

The South African government has resorted to shutting down mines temporarily as it tries to enforce safety measures and curb deaths that have hurt output in the world's top platinum producer and No. 3 gold producer.

But it has had little or no impact on illegal mining operations, which have increased because of higher metals prices especially for gold, and the first recession in 17 years in Africa's biggest economy.

In one of the country's worst death tolls in an illegal mining operation, 76 miners died in May when a fire broke out in an abandoned shaft belonging to Harmony Gold.

A presidential mine safety audit released in February revealed "disappointing" levels of safety compliance in the labour-intensive industry.

Parliament has passed new laws calling for tougher fines and criminal sanctions.

Quote of the week

A wise man will make more opportunities than he finds.

Francis Bacon

19th Annual NSW DPI Mechanical Engineering Safety Seminar
WatervieW Convention Centre, Sydney Olympic Park
Wednesday 5 and Thursday 6 August 2009

For further information telephone 02 4931 6666, email to minesafety.seminars@dpi.nsw.gov.au or visit our website at www.nsw.dpi.nsw.gov.au/minerals/safety/resources/seminars-and-conferences

TAS: Safety warning over mine blasts

Extract from ABC Online, Aus

Workplace Standards has issued safety warnings to all Tasmanian mines after two planned explosions caused damage.

The department investigated explosions at the Beaconsfield Gold Mine in January in 2008 and a similar incident at Copper Mines of Tasmania in Queenstown in February.

The Beaconsfield blast damaged vehicles and mining equipment.

No-one was seriously hurt in either explosion.

Managing director Roy Ormerod says Workplace Standards has decided not to lay charges over the blasts.



The Beaconsfield blast damaged equipment and vehicles. (File photo) (ABC News)

"When they planned the blasting, the result that occurred...we felt that when we looked at it was not all that foreseeable," he said.

"Now that we've learned from those two explosions we know in the future they will need to adjust their plans to ensure it doesn't happen again."

Friday 3 July 2009

WA: Rockfall probe 'must be made public'

Extract from ABC Online, Aus

The union representing workers at BHP's Leinster operations in Western Australia has

welcomed a further investigation into the company's Perseverance mine.

The State Mining Engineer, Martin Knee, has ordered BHP to undertake an independent assessment of the operations, after two rockfalls at the mine in the past three weeks.

The Australian Manufacturing Workers Union wants a federal parliamentary inquiry to look at the safety culture within BHP Billiton's WA operations.

The union's state secretary, Steve McCartney, says he wants the results of the independent assessment to be made public.

"We're saying that's probably too little too late, but we're glad that it's happening," he said.

"We'll be interested to see what the results are - what we'd like is the culture inside that mine constantly improve the safety and make sure it's safe at all times, not [just] after an inspection."

This week in mining accident history

Date Mine / Country (Aust unless stated)
<p>4 July 1838</p> <p>Huskar Colliery, Slikstone, Barnsley, UK Underground coal mine</p> <p>Source: www.dmm-pitwork.org.uk</p>
Incident
<p>26 dead: 11 girls, 15 boys drown in pit</p> <p>This is how the events unfolded on that day the 4th. July 1838.</p> <p>The Huskar Colliery was joined to Moorend Colliery, for ventilation purposes it was owned by Mr. R.C. Clarke of Noblethorpe.</p> <p>The day was hot and sunny but a violent thunderstorm raged from about 2 pm. to 4 pm. Hailstones and about two to two & half inches of rain fell.</p> <p>The pit had a shaft which was used for pulling coal up to the surface by a steam engine. In a wood there was a drift which was used for ventilation. The rain put out the boiler fire and the engine could not be used to take the men to the surface. A message was sent down the pit for all the miners to make their way to the pit bottom.</p>

The children, boys and girls, who worked in the mine, decided to wait until the engine was working again. They had then spent 9 hours underground. Forty of them decided to go out of the pit by way of the ventilation drift in Nabbs Wood. At the bottom of the drift, there was an air door and the children went through this. As they made their way up the drift, a stream, which had swollen into a rushing torrent by the downpour, overflowed down the drift.

The children were washed off their feet and down to the door through which they had just passed. The water rose against the door and twenty six children were drowned. Some of the older children managed to escape along a slit which lead to the Moorend Colliery.

James Garnett, the father of one of the children, was one who went in after the water had subsided and he found the body of his child. It could not be recovered until all the twenty six had been removed.

They were taken to Thostle Hall where George Teasdale and a man named Buckley washed their faces and they were taken home in carts.

The girls who died were:

- Catherine Garnett aged 8 years.
- Hannah Webster aged 13 years.
- Elizabeth Carr aged 13 years.
- Anne Moss aged 9 years.
- Elizabeth Hollin aged 15 years.
- Ellen Parker aged 15 years.
- Hannah Taylor aged 17 years.
- Mary Sellars aged 10 years.
- Elizabeth Clarkson aged 11 years. Who was buried at the feet of her brother.
- Sarah Jukes aged 8 years.
- Sarah Newton aged 8 years.

The boys who died were:

- George Burkinshaw aged 10 years.
- James Burkinshaw aged 7 years (brothers).
- Isaac Wright aged 12 years.
- Abraham Wright aged 8 years (brothers).
- James Clarkson aged 16 years.
- Francis Hoyland aged 13 years.
- William Alick aged 12 years.
- Samuel Horne aged 10 years.
- Eli Hutchinson aged 9 years.
- George Garnett aged 9 years.
- John Simpson aged 9 years.
- George Lamb aged 8 years.
- William Womerfley aged 8 years.
- James Turton aged 10 years.
- John Gothard aged 8 years.

The children came from Silkstone, Silkstone Common, Dodworth and Thurgoland.

This tragic event spurred the government of the day to enquire into the conditions of women and children in mines, leading to Lord Shaftesbury's Mines Act in 1842, prohibiting their employment underground.

Saturday 4 July 2009

Four miners missing in southwest China gas leak

Extract from Xinhua, China

CHONGQING, - One coal miner was rescued and four remained missing Saturday after a gas leak in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality, a local official said.

The accident occurred at about 6:30pm at Kangjia Mine in Sanhui Township, Hechuan District, when five miners were underground, said Guo Mingyue, a deputy district chief.

Rescue work continued after one miner was saved.

The private mine is licensed and has expanded its annual production capacity to 120,000 tonnes from 50,000 tonnes after technological innovation.

The mine accident is under investigation.

QLD: Driver killed after truck drives into quarry

Extract from ABC Online, Aus & Queensland Mines and Energy

A man has been killed in a truck crash in north Queensland this afternoon.

Police say the truck drove off the Flinders Highway into a hard rock quarry west of Townsville at about 1:00 pm AEST.

The driver died at the scene.

The truck was descending a haul road from the upper benches of the quarry when it tipped on its side and crashed into a rock face.

The Queensland Mines and Energy, Mines Inspectorate will conduct a detailed nature and cause report for the Chief Inspector and the Coroner.

This is the fifth fatal accident on mines in Queensland in eleven months.

Tuesday 7 July 2009

USA: NV gold mine fined \$500,000 for fatality

RENO, Nev.—Federal regulators have fined Newmont Mining Corp. more than \$500,000 for safety violations they say contributed to the death of a worker at an underground gold mine in Nevada two years ago.

The Mine Safety and Health Administration also announced that four supervisors for the Denver-based mining company have agreed to pay a combined \$60,000 in individual penalties for their role in the accident at the Midas Mine north of Elko in June 2007.

The agency said managers "showed a disregard for the miners' welfare" before the victim fell through a level of the mine while operating a loader.

It said several Newmont employees were aware of safety deficiencies at the time but continued to require miners to work in hazardous areas.

19th Annual NSW DPI Electrical Engineering Safety Seminar
WatervieW Convention Centre, Sydney Olympic Park
Wednesday 11 and Thursday 12 November 2009

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Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

R

Rock drills Term applied to all compressed air-driven drills used to bore holes for explosives.



- Ed.