



Mining Accident News No.0923

13 to 24 July 2009

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Monday 13 July 2009

S.Africa: Harmony Gold reports fatal accident at Masimong mine

Extract from www.miningweekly.com

JOHANNESBURG – South African gold-miner Harmony Gold on Monday reported that a fall-of-ground incident had led to the death of an employee at its Masimong mine, in the Free State province, on Saturday.

Spokesperson Marian van der Walt said that the mine's management and the Department of Mineral Resources were still investigating the incident and would then decide whether or not the mine would be closed.

A mineworker had died in a locomotive accident at the mine in January, while another worked

had been killed in a fall-of-ground incident in June.

Wednesday 15 July 2009

Freeport mine safety under attack

THE SAFETY of working in the Indonesian province of Papua has come into question following a recent spate of deaths at Freeport mine.

Melbourne man Drew Grant was murdered as he travelled to the mine on 11 July 2009 while a security guard was killed in a second clash between mine workers and rebel suspects.

Grant's family has said that he would not have been working there if he thought his life was in danger.

Offshore petroleum safety unsure

FEDERAL Resources Minister Martin Ferguson says that safety performance in the offshore petroleum industry needs to be improved urgently.

The Minister's comments follow the June 2008 gas pipeline explosion at Varanus Island, Western Australia and two maritime safety incidents during Cyclone Billy in December 2008, off the Western Australian coast.

Ferguson released reports on the incidences which were presented at a meeting of the Ministerial Council on Mineral and Petroleum Resources in Darwin.

The main findings in the reports found there were potential gaps in maritime occupational health and safety and a less than optimal interface between NOPSA and AMSA.

The reports also found risk assessment processes needed improvement, better

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compliance tools were needed and an assessment of safety culture.

The MCMPR would consult with the petroleum industry by the end of November 2009 with a view to introducing appropriate legislative amendments in early-2010.

TAS: Miner sues over Savage River fire

Extract from ABC Online, Aus

The owner of an iron-ore mine on Tasmania's west coast has lodged a \$43 million dollar damages claim over a fire in 2006.

The fire broke out in the Savage River mine while a mill was being repaired.

Goldamere Pty Ltd, trading as Australian Bulk Minerals (ABM), is suing five other companies including the principal contractor Metso Minerals, a sub-contractor and an equipment provider.

ABM's claim states a loss of \$12 million for fire damage and a further \$31.5 million for lost income.

The parties have appeared in the Hobart Supreme Court to argue over legal privilege for documents relating to the claim.

The court's decision has been reserved.

USA: More injuries reported in mine accident

Extract from WFIE-TV - Evansville, IN, USA

HOPKINS CO., KY - 14 News has obtained a report that shows some of the miners' injuries were more severe than what Ken American mine officials first said.

Last Thursday, Ken American Resources Incorporated issued a press release stating the most serious injury they were aware of was a broken leg.

The company has not issued any statements since then, but 14 News learned Wednesday, injuries from the accident were much more severe. A broken pelvis, a fractured pelvis,

compound fracture to the lower leg, fractured knee cap, and bruised ribs are all injuries included in a document given to 14 News by the Kentucky Office of Communication and Public Outreach. Those injuries were all sustained when a mantrip carrying eight miners had a brake malfunction.

Donald Pearson, 25, was one of the miners injured. His father-in-law Roger Hulsey, a retired miner, talked about what Donald told him about the accident.

"He was screaming at the other guys that they were going to crash, 'hold on,'" Hulsey said. "He had seen it coming, but there was nothing that he could do."

Hulsey said the mine car was traveling down a seven degree slope at nearly 70 miles per hour. After the accident, his son-in-law was taken to Muhlenberg Community Hospital where doctors found damage to his shoulder and knee. Since then, Hulsey said Donald has been to the emergency room twice, having trouble balancing.

"When he stands up, he loses his balance and everything starts spinning," Hulsey said. "They think he has some neurological problems going on in his head where he took an impact."

According to the report, four of the eight injured miners are still in the hospital.

Hulsey said doctors told his family Donald could be out of work for a minimum of six to eight months.

"He's got four children, two twin babies and two other children," Hulsey said. "Six people have to live and eat, that is going to be very difficult."

The Office of Communications and Public Outreach said that investigators have completed their on-site investigation at the mine.

Their next step: to interview the injured miners. A full report of the accident should be released at the end of July or First of August.

Ken American Resource owners Murray Energy Corporation did not respond to make a comment for this story.

Thursday 16 July 2009

S.Africa: Mining accident claims 12 lives

Extract from www.ioi.co.za

Maputo - Twelve miners have died in a mine collapse in Mozambique's remote north-west, state media reported on Wednesday.

The victims were likely all Mozambicans, the governor of Niassa province, Arnaldo Bimbe, told the Noticias newspaper.

Local officials said few details were available because of the mine's remote location.

Northwestern Mozambique is rich in gold, coal and other mineral resources, and informal mining is widespread.

The formal mining sector was underdeveloped for years due to Mozambique's 16-year civil war, which ended in 1992.

Quote of the week

The soul is healed by being with children.

Fyodor Dostoevsky (Russian 1821-1881)

2 miners killed and 3 injured in coal mine blast in Pakistan

Extract from [SteelGuru - Gurgaon, Haryana, India](#)

Pakistani: The International News reported that two mineworkers were killed and three others sustained injuries in a blast inside a coalmine in the Kalaya tehsil of Orakzai Agency on Tuesday.

Sources said the mineworkers were busy inside the coalmine at Doly Killay in Kalaya tehsil when a blast took place due to gas accumulation inside the mine, leaving Bacha Rehman and Umar Hadi dead on the spot and Umar Badshah, Muhammad Faud and Malik Amin injured.

All of them belonged to Shangla district. Soon after the incident, the rescue team rushed to the spot and retrieved the dead and injured workers from the debris. The injured were taken to the District Headquarters Hospital in Hangu. Meanwhile, the Rescue centre in charge Roshan Khan said that "Most of the workers are not skillful and trained that's why such incidents happen frequently".

Saturday 18 July 2009

China: Downturn reduces coalmine fatalities

Extract from [China Daily](#)

The economic slowdown has dramatically reduced coalmine disaster fatalities, the work safety watchdog said on Friday.

The fatality rate for both registered and underground coal pits in China dropped to a record low of 6.4 deaths per day from January to June this year, said Huang Yi, spokesman of the State Administration of Work Safety.

The fatality rate stood at 10.4 and 8.8 deaths per day respectively in 2007 and 2008.

"The increase for the nation's coal production in the first half of this year, which stands at 4.2 percent, has been far lower than recent years," Huang, also deputy head of the State Administration of Coal Mine Safety, told reporters after a press conference organized by the State Council Information Office.

"And the production in the coming months this year is unlikely to increase too much despite the economic recovery, so there should be fewer disasters at coal mines," he added.

Coal mine disasters also dropped by more than 20 percent between January and June, causing 1,175 deaths, a year-on-year decrease of 18.4 percent.

However, serious accidents, meaning ones that cause more than 30 fatalities, still rang an alarm for the coal industry, which generates about 80 percent of China's electricity, the official said.

Thirty miners were killed and 77 injured after excessive explosives triggered a mine explosion about 1,000 m underground on May 30 at the State-owned Tonghua Coal Mine near Chongqing in southwest China. The mine had doubled its production capacity to 600,000 tons per year before the accident.

The fatality rate probably will be a record low this year due to less production, said Huang Shengchu, head of China Coal Information Institute.

"Amid financial difficulty, coal producers can no longer over produce. Less exploitation has resulted in fewer accidents and deaths so far this year," he told China Daily on Friday.

Huang is concerned that the fatality rate might jump back up next year as China's economy recovers.

The Chinese economy grew 7.9 percent in the second quarter as a result of the government's 4 trillion yuan (\$586 billion) stimulus spending.

China's coal industry, with nearly 5,000 deaths in 2006, used to comprise 80 percent of mining deaths worldwide, official numbers showed.

Authorities have already closed 120,000 illegal coalmines since 2005, and will shut down another 4,000 by 2010.

Monday 20 July 2009

S. Africa: Mine accident kills two, traps eight

Extract from The Times

THE total number of mine deaths in South Africa since January is nearing the 100 mark after two fatalities at Impala Platinum's Rustenburg operations yesterday.

Excluding the latest Impala fatalities, the official number recorded by the department of minerals and energy yesterday was 95.

According to earlier reports by the National Union of Mineworkers yesterday, eight workers

were trapped underground at Implats Impala platinum after a "fall of ground" incident.

The incident occurred at about noon. The mining company later announced the death of two workers.

David Brown, Implats' chief executive, said: "We are deeply shocked by this major incident and our deepest condolences go out to the loved ones of the people who lost their lives."

By yesterday afternoon, rescue teams were still at the scene of the accident searching for seven employees who were unaccounted for.

All operations were immediately suspended at 14 Shaft.

Lesiba Seshoka, NUM spokesman, said the union was "very angry" and was eager to know the official cause of the accident.

"There are contradictions around the cause of the fatal accident as some are saying it is the fall of ground and some say it was due to the collapsing of the roof."

He said the NUM will keep a close eye on the report.

"We believe that mines should carry responsibility for what happens in their operations."

Last year, there were 168 fatalities in the mining industry from 221 recorded in 2007.

This week in mining accident history (1)

16 July 1986

Moura No.4 Mine, Moura, Qld, Aus

Methane explosion kills 12

Source: www.dme.qld.gov.au

At about 11:05 a.m. on 16th July, 1986 an explosion in Moura No. 4 underground mine in central Queensland. The 12 miners who were extracting pillars in the main dips section were killed. Their bodies were recovered on 23rd July, 1986 after an extensive recovery operation.

The inquiry into the fatal accident was held in Rockhampton conducted before the mining warden and four persons having practical mining knowledge. The inquiry commenced on 9th February, 1987 and closed on 27th February 1987. Evidence presented to the inquiry showed that the upper part of the seven metre thick seam was being worked and that the strata between the seam worked and the seam approximately sixty metres above it consists mainly of massive bands of sandstone. The seam was described by witnesses as "fairly gassy".

The inquiry found that the mine was well ventilated and stone dusted and return airways were continuously monitored for carbon monoxide and methane. Methane detecting instruments were also available to the section's deputies.

The inquiry found that a roof fall had occurred in the goaf and that the wind blast from the fall blew a mixture of methane, air and coal dust into the working area. An explosive atmosphere developed in the working area and in particular around the deputy's flame safety lamp.

An ignition occurred creating a violent explosion which caused extensive damage throughout the section. The explosion was quenched by the presence of a water barrier in the belt roadway and substantial quantities of water in swilleys in other roadways. Some eight possible sources of ignition were considered. The inquiry considered that the flame safety lamp, although properly assembled, was the most likely source of ignition.



A brass statue of a miner commemorating the Moura Underground No 4 Disaster in 1986.

A number of recommendations were made by the members of the inquiry, the most important of these being that flame safety lamps be prohibited from use in underground coal mines in Queensland subject to limited exceptions.

This week in mining accident history (2)

24 July 1979

Appin Colliery, Appin, NSW, Aus

Underground Coal Mine

Gas Explosion during pre-planned ventilation change resulted in 14 deaths

Source: www.illawarracoal.com

Appin Colliery was one of a number of coal mines owned by Australian Iron and Steel Ltd. operating in the Bulli seam, west of the Illawarra escarpment.



Commencing production in 1962, Appin developed a reputation as a "gassy" mine as it worked the 2.5 to 3 metre thick at some 500 metres depth of cover. "It is no exaggeration to say that the story of Appin is a story of gas and ventilation problems." - *Judge A. J. Goran, Report of Explosion at Appin Colliery.*

At approximately 11.00 pm on 24th July, 1979, a gas explosion in "K" Panel occurred during a pre-planned ventilation change in that panel, resulted in the death of 14 employees. Of the 31 survivors 25 were injured.

A decision in early June had been made by colliery management that the two heading development known as "K" panel was to be increased to a three

heading panel and driven by two continuous miners operating simultaneously. The rationale for this change was to better manage the ventilation of the adjacent longwall face. The centre heading would be on intake, the flanking headings on return air.

It was during the final phase of this ventilation change that the right hand heading was standing at 73 metres on brattice ventilation, an auxiliary fan had been connected to the preinstalled flume line and a new overcast across the centre heading linked the two returns.

The evidence presented to the inquiry into the ensuing explosion held by His Honour, Judge A. J. Goran Q.C. strongly suggested that an explosive mixture of methane and air had built up in this right hand heading and was ignited by a flame travelling inbye via the flume line from the auxiliary fan site. The ignition source would appear to have been an electrical spark within the starter box for the auxiliary fan, the box at the time not being flame proof due to work being undertaken by an electrician at the site.

The first rescue team into the panel came across two men who, at great danger to themselves, were hosing down smouldering items and generally attempting to cool the area.

In the panel crib room the team located the bodies of ten men, some in sitting positions at the crib room table obviously in the midst of a meal. All of the men had ingested substantial quantities of carbon monoxide.

These ten men were Francis James Garrity, Jurgen Lauterbach, Alexander Hardie Lawson, Peter Andrew Peck, Roy Rawlings, John Leslie Stonham, Roy Williams, Garry John Woods, Geoffrey Ernest Johnson and Ian Victor Giffard.

The body of Mr. Brewin, the electrician was located some twenty metres from the fan, he had ingested a substantial quantity of carbon monoxide.

Mr Rawcliffes body was located in the shuttle car under a heap of miner cable and Mr. Staats, machine fitter, was located inbye the shuttle car. The body of Mr. Oldcorn, the Assistant Undermanager, was located in the afternoon of the 25th.

The report resulting from the inquiry made numerous recommendations and a press release by Mr Ron Mulock, Minister for Mineral Resources, stated that "The NSW Department of Mineral Resources plans to

implement all recommendations of the Goran inquiry into the Appin Mine explosion".

Editor's bit

The following description is taken from Hopkins A, "Crime Without Punishment: the Appin Mine Disaster" [1981] *The Australian Quarterly* 455-460.

In July 1979 there was an explosion in a coal mine at Appin, New South Wales, killing 14 miners. The mine was owned by Australian Iron and Steel Ltd. The likely immediate cause of the explosion occurred when an electrician switched on an electric exhaust fan, creating a spark which ignited a build up of methane gas in the mine. A subsequent inquiry found that the electrician had not taken the required steps to insulate the fan's motor from the outside gas. At the same time, the inquest into the deaths found that "there existed in the mine an atmosphere of complacency confirmed by the evidence of breaches and tolerances to proper standards of safety". The inquiry found that the build up of methane gas in the mine had occurred when a planned change in the ventilation system was not implemented. This was because the corporate officers who had planned the change did not adequately explain it to the employees in the mine. According to Hopkins' research, the inquiry found that "the mine management had exhibited a generally negligent attitude towards the ventilation changeover". Moreover, the inquiry found that high levels of methane were tolerated by mine management, in breach of safety regulations. The mining corporation was not prosecuted for the breach of safety regulations nor for causing the deaths of the 14 miners.

Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

S

Scotch boiler Sometimes called the 'economic boiler' and 'colonial boiler'. An internally fired return firetube type. It was of larger diameter and shorter in length than most other boilers, and had one to four fire grates in its front face, feeding numerous fire tubes that ran to the end of the boiler then returned to vent through a smoke box and chimney extending from the top of the boiler above the fire hearths.

- Ed.