



Mining Accident News No.1006

1 to 7 March 2010

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Monday 1 March 2010

12 killed in granite mine mishap in AP in India

Extract from Steel Guru, India

It is reported that twelve workers were killed in an accident at a granite mine at Chimakurti late on Thursday night in Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh and two bodies have been recovered so far.

The report said that a heavy boulder fell on the workers and there was also a landslide. It may take a few days to recover the remaining bodies.

Mr B Srinivasa Reddy minister for mines visited the spot and ordered suspension of granite mining at Chimakurti. An expert committee would be constituted and after three days, it

would visit each granite unit and inspect the safety measures.

1 dead, 31 trapped in N.China coal mine flood

Extract from Xinhua, China



A rescuer walks by the entrance of the coal mine where 31 miners are still trapped after water flooded the mine in Wuhai city of north China's Inner Mongolia autonomous region on March 1, 2010. [Photo/Xinhua]

HOHHOT - One miner died and 31 others are trapped after a coal mine was flooded in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region early Monday, the rescue headquarters said.

Water gushed into the pit of Luotuoshan Coal Mine, which was being built in Wuhai City, at least 600 kilometers from the regional capital, Hohhot, at 7:29 a.m., according to officials at the rescue operation headquarters.

An initial investigation showed 77 miners were digging tunnels at different depths as part of an infrastructure construction project and 46 were lifted to the ground.

However, a miner died during first-aid treatment at the site.

Rescuers are busy installing three pumps each with a pumping capacity of 280 cubic meters of water per hour and preparing to drill into the shaft to reach 12 miners trapped at about 189 meters underground and 19 at a depth of about 289 meters.

Five ambulances and more than 10 medical staff have arrived at the site.

NOTE: Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual sender, and are not necessarily the views of Industry & Investment NSW.

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Zhao Shuanglian, vice chairman of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, told rescuers they were battling against time to save the trapped miners.

Luotuoshan Coal Mine is owned by Wuhai Energy Co. Ltd. and its parent company is Shenhua Group Corp. Ltd., one of China's major mining firms.

Construction of the mine started in 2006. It is designed to produce 1.5 million tonnes of coal a year.

Pakistan: Four dead in Sindh coal mine

Extract from The News, Pakistan

DADU: Over 19 people were killed in separate accidents in interior Sindh on Sunday. According to reports, labourers of a mining company were working in a coalmine in the mountains of Khanoot, district Jamshoro. They were searching for a proper spot to start digging for coal. Suddenly, a heavy mass of the cave's roof fell on them, killing four of them on the spot. They were identified as Naseem-ur-Rahman, Rahman Din, Wazir Khan and Meer Hasan. Ten other labourers fell unconscious.

The company stopped the work after the accident and managed to pull all labourers out of the mine, including the four bodies and the 10 who had fallen unconscious

Safety at Turkey's coal mines under fire

Extract from UPI.com

ANKARA, Turkey, -- Abysmal safety records and commercial corruption creates a deadly mix for the coal-mining sector in Turkey, officials said.

A methane explosion at a coal mine last week in Balikesir province in western Turkey killed 13 workers and left 33 others injured. A 2006 accident at the same mine resulted in 17 deaths while a December accident in neighboring Bursa province killed 19 miners.

Nizamettin Tiryaki, a mining engineer at Turkey's General Mining Union, said difficult terrain

meant human labor was needed to extract coal in the country. Meanwhile, he tells Turkey's English-language daily newspaper Today's Zaman, corporate ties were making it difficult to improve the safety record.

Tiryaki said mines are inspected by people paid off by the private owners of the mines. This, he said, makes it "impossible" for the inspectors to make an independent assessment of working conditions.

He called on independent inspectors to look at the safety records at Turkish mines, complaining there were only 700 inspectors commissioned by the Turkish Labor Ministry.

Advocates for Turkish miners, meanwhile, said it was time Ankara signs on to international conventions outlining mine safety.

Quote of the week



"Bear in mind the simple rule, X squared to the power of two minus five over the seven point eight three times nineteen is approximately equal to the cube root of MCC squared divided by X minus a quarter of a third percent. Keep that in mind, and you can't go very far wrong."

Eric Idle,
(English comedian, 1943-)

This week in mining accident history

2 March 1915

Layland No.3 Mine

Layland, West Virginia, USA

Underground Coal Mine

Coal dust explosion

112 killed

Source www.wvculture.org/history/disasters/layland05

**NEW RIVER & POCAHONTAS
CONSOLIDATED COAL COMPANY
DUST EXPLOSION**

On Tuesday, March 2, 1915, at 8:30 A. M. an explosion occurred in the No. 3 mine located at Layland, Fayette County, operated by the New River & Pocahontas Consolidated Coal Company, resulting in the death of one hundred and twelve persons, one hundred and eleven on the inside and one on the outside.



Layland mine portal after the explosion

At the time of the explosion there were one hundred and sixty-four persons at work in the mine, seven of whom were working on the fourth left off of third main entry and were rescued shortly after the explosion. Fortunately the fan was not damaged to any extent and in a very short time Mr Kneer, Mine Superintendent and Mr Nahodil, Mine Foreman, entered the mine finding the overcast partly destroyed and stoppings blown out. They returned to the outside reporting the conditions found to Mr H. M. Bertolet, the General Superintendent, Mr Holliday and Mr Absalom, District Mine Inspectors, who had arrived at the mine, and under the direction of Mr. H. M. Bertolet rescue crews were organized who immediately entered the mine for the purpose of restoring ventilation, removing the dead and rescuing the living should any be found.

The rescue work was carried on successfully without any interruption and rapid progress was made under the existing conditions, as the force of the explosion had displaced the timbers at the main entrance of the mine, causing the same to be greatly obstructed by a large quantity of earth and stone, which required several days to move. For this reason supplies were taken into the

mine through a narrow space by the side of the fan, as there was no track in the air course and all material had to be carried into the mine, the farthest point being at least one mile from the entrance, but this work was carried on day and night, with no complaint, as there were several hundred miners and mine officials on the scene ready and willing to aid in the rescue work.

The working force was divided into several crews, working six hour shifts until twelve o'clock Friday night, at which time all the bodies found on the tunnel and main fourth headings had been removed to the outside. Having completed the work in this part of the mine the men on duty were called to the outside and the fan stopped, for the purpose of making the necessary changes to reverse the air current. While this work was being done a large force of men were removing the obstructions from the main entrance of the mine, as this work could be completed on the following morning, at which time the haulage ways could be used in handling material and bodies.

About 8:00 o'clock A. M. Saturday morning the entrance to the mine was cleared and a number of men were waiting for the fan to be started when they were greatly surprised to see five miners walk out of the mine, reporting that they were working on the ninth left entry off of third main at the time of the explosion and that they had made several attempts each day to come to the outside but were unable to do so owing to the large quantity of afterdamp which was being forced from the tunnel and fourth main headings through the sixth left to the main No. 3, which at this time was the main return through which they would have to travel to get to the outside.

Upon investigation, a few hours after the fan had been stopped, they found that the natural ventilation had improved the condition sufficient for them to make their way to the outside, having in their possession a note which was picked up by one of them in their travel, giving the information that there was forty-one miners in the tenth left heading. When this fact was made known a number of men hurriedly entered the

mine, travelling to the tenth left heading, where they found a slate stopping constructed on the entry. Hastily removing part of this stopping and going a distance of about one hundred feet, another slate stopping was found, which was also hastily removed, behind which was found a number of men.

Upon investigation, several more men were found in a room, all of whom were brought on the main entry, many of them being in an exhausted condition, having had nothing to eat for four days and nights except the strings in their shoes and bark from the mine props. As soon as possible these men were assisted to the outside, where they received proper care and attention under the direction of the physicians and quickly revived from their fearful experience.

The scenes on the outside upon the arrival of the forty-six men alive, who had been given up as dead, were beyond description. Among the persons rescued there were several nationalities and of different ages. One of them a Mr Whalen, who had passed his seventy-fourth year, and who was working with his son, John, in room No. 24 on ninth left heading, at the time of the explosion, and his statement was to the effect that there was practically no disturbance in that part of the mine, just a feeling that a man could not describe, but from his experience he realized that an explosion had occurred. His son called to him and they made their way to the main entry, where they found a wrecked trip of cars, but the afterdamp was so strong that they were unable to get any further.

By this time a large number of men who worked on the ninth and tenth lefts came to them and they decided among themselves to make no attempt to make their way out, but would return to the tenth left, as this part of the mine had not been affected. By some means these men became separated, five going into the ninth left and forty-one into the tenth left, where they immediately proceeded to construct slate stoppings to protect themselves from the afterdamp, remaining within the enclosed chamber for four days and nights, during which

time many prayers were made that they would be rescued or be relieved from their suffering by death, which would, undoubtedly, have been their doom had not one of the five men making their way out, found the note stating that they were behind the barricade on the tenth left.



Remains of the mining complex

When it was reported that an explosion had occurred at this mine it was a great surprise, as this was considered one of the safest mines in the field, being at an altitude of two thousand and five hundred feet, operating the Fire Creek seam, varying in thickness from three and a half to five feet, developed on the double and triple entry plan and ventilated by an eighteen foot Capell fan at a speed of eighty revolutions, producing eighty-five thousand cubic feet of air per minute, divided into four splits and so regulated that an adequate amount of air would be furnished and properly distributed to each split as required by law.

The mine was generally damp, with the exception of the live workings, where there was a slight accumulation of dust, but not to the extent of it being considered dangerous. At no time had any dangerous quantity of explosive gas been detected.

John I. Absalom, State District Mine Inspector, made a thorough examination of the mine January 19, 1915, and his report showed the mine to be in first class condition, Mr R. Y. Muir, Inspector for the Operating Company, examined the mine February 25th and he found the mine in good condition. No gas was reported by either of the above named Inspectors. Both of

these men are well known by all of the mining people in this section of the state and considered expert mining men.

On the 15th and 16th following the explosion, officials of the Company, State Mine Inspectors and a number of mining men examined the mine for the purpose of ascertaining the cause of the explosion and, if possible, the point of origin. In making this examination all conditions were carefully noted and it was unanimously agreed that the explosion was due to dust and the point of origin at the face of air course to the third left heading, at which place a hole was found four and a half feet in depth, angling toward the entry and lacking only eight inches of being bored through, as the pillar was very thin at this point.

The conditions showed that this hole had been heavily charged with a high explosive, as one of the bodies found nearby was headless and judging from the position in which it was found it is an evident fact that the hole had been charged with dynamite, had not been properly tamped, and the small barrier of coal at the back of the hole giving but little resistance caused the shot to blow through into the entry and ignite the dust, which caused an explosion at this point and was propagated throughout a greater part of the mine by fine dust which finds lodgement on ribs, roof and pavement, and which is readily put in suspension, which added fuel increased the force of the explosion and violence, destroying stopping, doors and overcasts, cutting off the ventilation from the affected part of the mine, resulting in the death of a large number of persons from suffocation, as only a few of the bodies were found to be mutilated.

Today there is little left of the mining town, only a few company houses remain. The mine closed in the 1980s.

Further reading:

- “*The Man Who Saved Forty-Two Lives in the Layland Mine Explosion*”, by Dennis Deitz (1992), Mountain Memories Books.
- Bureau of Mines report @ www.usmra.com

Tuesday 2 March 2010

USA: Methane test issue started more than a year ago, mine foreman says

Extract from Charleston Gazette

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A Patriot Coal foreman told state and federal investigators he was ordered more than a year ago not to keep records of explosive methane levels he discovered inside sealed portions of the company's Federal No. 2 Mine in Monongalia County.

John Renner of Morgantown said he was also told never to evacuate the huge underground mining operation, regardless of whether mandated methane tests showed dangerous concentrations of the explosive gas.

Renner has been charged with one count of falsifying methane-testing records, but is cooperating with federal prosecutors in an investigation that has targeted at least five other Patriot Coal mine managers at Federal No. 2.

"I'm not going to continue lying for this company," Renner told the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration and the state Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training.

Renner described the situation at Federal No. 2 in a Jan. 29 interview in Morgantown, a recording of which was provided to the Gazette by the state.

Six months ago, Obama administration Labor Secretary Hilda Solis toured Federal No. 2 and joined company and United Mine Workers officials in touting the mine as a model of good safety practices.

Now, the operation -- which employs nearly 500 workers and produced nearly 4 million tons of coal last year -- is the subject of a broad federal inquiry into allegations of faking key safety reports.

Patriot officials have acknowledged an ongoing investigation "where it is alleged that one or more employees made inaccurate entries in

official mine records," but declined further comment.

The investigation focuses on methane tests Patriot Coal is required to take in and around parts of the underground mine that have been sealed off from active production areas. Mine safety regulators are watching sealed areas more closely after explosions in 2006 that killed a total of 17 workers at the Sago Mine in Upshur County and the Darby Mine in Kentucky.

In his Jan. 29 interview, Renner told investigators about an incident in late 2008, when Federal No. 2 was evacuated because of explosive methane levels in a sealed area.

That testing and the evacuation occurred while an MSHA inspector was at the mine, Renner said. But afterward, Renner said, mine ventilation foreman Randy Coffindaffer pulled him aside and told him to ignore poor methane readings unless an MSHA inspector was present.

"He cussed me and screamed at me, told me I was never, ever, under any circumstances [to evacuate the mine]," Renner said. "He said, 'Do you know much money you're costing this company for evacuating [the mine]?'"

Renner also described an incident he said occurred in March 2009, when he tried to get Coffindaffer to co-sign a mine safety record book entry that showed dangerous levels of methane in a sealed area.

According to Renner, Coffindaffer ripped the page out of the book.

"It went through the shredder and into the garbage can," Renner said. "He said I better never get caught putting that in the book again."

Coffindaffer was not available Monday afternoon, according to a man who answered the phone at Federal No. 2's main office.

After Renner began talking to investigators, Federal No. 2 has been evacuated three times in the last month because of explosive methane levels found inside sealed areas. The operation

remained closed Monday while Patriot Coal and MSHA try to negotiate a solution to the methane levels in those parts of the mine.

Suzy Bohnert, an MSHA spokeswoman, said agency officials were to meet with Patriot again Monday about the issue and would need more time to review the company's proposed plan.

"We do not have a timeline on when Patriot Mine workers may go back to work," Bohnert said. "This will be based on the mine officials' plan to inert the atmosphere in the sealed area."

Wednesday 3 March 2010

4 killed in Georgian coal mine explosion

Extract from CanadianBusiness.com

TBILISI, Georgia - Georgian officials say a powerful explosion killed four coal miners in the ex-Soviet state.

The Interior Ministry said Wednesday several more miners were wounded in the blast in the western town of Tkibuli, one of them severely.

It said the blast apparently was due to methane.

The town about 230 kilometers (140 miles) west of the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, is the center of coal mining in the impoverished Caucasus Mountains nation.

Gold mining accident kills 2 workers in Guyana

Extract from Bloomberg.com

GEORGETOWN, Guyana -- A gold mining accident that killed two men in Guyana is prompting calls for better enforcement of safety regulations.

The two workers were buried Tuesday in the collapse of a sand pit they were excavating near the southwestern border with Brazil. The Gold and Diamond Miners Association says the pit was 75 feet (23 meters) deep, despite rules limiting them to 40 feet (12 meters).

Several recent accidents have hit the small-scale mining industry that has expanded rapidly to capitalize on soaring gold prices.

Association secretary Tony Shields said Wednesday that the government should send engineers into the interior to help assure safety standards.

USA: Couple sues Speed Mining, Patriot Coal for injuries

Extract from The West Virginia Record, USA

CHARLESTON -- A Princewick man and his wife are suing Speed Mining and Patriot Coal after he was injured while working at the American Eagle Mine.

On Feb. 6, 2009, Melvin D. Hubbard was working as a mine electrician and was injured while riding on a "tub" that was being used as a mantrip vehicle, according to a complaint filed Feb. 16 in Kanawha Circuit Court.

Hubbard claims while riding in the tub it was involved in a collision with another vehicle that had been stopped and unattended on the same track, which resulted in injuries, including four broken ribs, a punctured lung, extensive bruising, extensive scarring, disfigurement and a severe right shoulder injury that required extensive surgery.

Hubbard claims the surgery caused him to suffer extensive nerve damages and he lost the use of his right hand.

The mantrip vehicle had no seatbelts, no lights on the front of it, had no working brakes or working radio to allow the driver to determine the existence of other traffic on the same track, the seat was not bolted down to the floor and the driver was driving too fast for the conditions, according to the suit.

Hubbard claims management had actual knowledge in advance of the accident of the safety violations because he complained to the chief electrician concerning the driver's speed on mantrips and poor condition of the equipment.

Hubbard claims he cannot sleep at night, is required to take Hydrocodone and Loritab, has lost the ability to enjoy life, and has lost the ability to perform necessary household services for himself, his wife, Brenda Hubbard, and son, Jason Hubbard.

The Hubbards are seeking damages in an amount to be determined by a jury. They are being represented by Richard Neely, John D. Wooton and Christopher M. Davis.

The case has been assigned to Circuit Judge Paul Zakaib Jr.

QLD: Hydraulic hose rupture prompts safety alert

The Queensland Mines Inspectorate has issued a safety alert after a high pressure emulsion line on a hydraulic longwall pump sled ruptured.

Fortunately, no personnel were working in the area at the time so there were no injuries.

However, the ruptured line damaged a walkway platform that was above the unit as well as an electrical cubicle and the pump cart itself.

The sudden release of energy and high pressure hydraulic fluid caused the walkway to be thrown around three metres.

According to the Inspectorate, the emulsion hoses had rubbed together, compromising the integrity of the outer casing and steel reinforcing braids.



"Poor design was a major contributing factor in the incident, including the hose routing, hose retention and hose segregation," the Department said.

"No inspection regime was in place for the hoses and other components.

"Segregation of personnel from high pressure hoses needs to be considered in the design process."

The Inspectorate is recommending mines ensure hose and pipe layouts are designed to eliminate contact and rubbing.

High pressure hoses also need to be securely mounted and regularly inspected for wear and abrasion.

Personnel access in and around high pressure installations needs to be kept to a minimum and segregated where possible.

Thursday 4 March 2010

China: Trapped miners might still be alive, spokesman

Extract from Crienglish.com

Some of the 31 miners trapped in a north China mine flood still have a slim chance of survival, a safety official of the Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region said Thursday as rescue work went into its fourth day.

"Twelve of them are believed to be trapped at a mining platform 202 meters underground, at least 10 meters above the surface of the flood water," said Wu Qingfeng, a spokesman with the emergency rescue headquarters at Luotuoshan Coal Mine in Wuhai, a city about 600 kilometers from the regional capital, Hohhot.

The other 19 people believed to be at another platform 287 meters underground, might have drowned, he said.

Wu said it was not possible to use life detectors to see if people were still alive in the flooded pit. "Rescuers are still working all-out to drain the flood water and drill into the shaft."

On Wednesday, a group of People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers and excavators had drilled nearly 200 meters down.

"They will drill deeper Thursday and are expected to cap the hole where the water is pouring out, about 420 meters underground," said Wu.

An estimated 100,000 cubic meters of water poured into the pit of Luotuoshan Coal Mine following a flood Monday morning.

Of the 77 people working in the pit, one body has been recovered and 45 have survived the accident so far.

Most of the miners are migrants from Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region and the provinces of Shaanxi, Shanxi and Henan.

Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

T

tailings

Rock, earth, gravel, sand etc that is the residue from separation or other treatment of washdirt or ore by water. Different types of tailing can indicate different mining processes.



Mine tailings - Frenchmens Creek Colorado, USA

-Ed