



Mining Accident News No.1008

15 to 26 March 2010

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Monday 15 March 2010

25 dead in central China coal mine fire

Extract from The Seattle Times, USA

BEIJING — An electrical fire at an illegal coal mine in central China has left 25 people dead, the latest fatal accident to rock the country's mining industry.

Three people - the mine's owner, manager and an investor - have been detained by police following the Monday night blaze at the mine in Henan province, near the famed Shaolin kung fu temple, said He Yu, an official in the press office of the Zhengzhou city Communist Party.

The mine is located in Xinmi city, which is overseen by Zhengzhou city.

Six of the 31 miners underground managed to escape the fire, He Yu said.

It was not clear how the electrical fire started. An investigation was under way.

China's coal mines are the world's deadliest, despite a multiyear government effort to reduce fatalities. Most accidents are blamed on failure to follow safety rules or lack of required ventilation, fire-control and other equipment.

Tuesday 16 March 2010

S.Africa: Worker killed at AngloGold mine

Extract from the Times LIVE, Johannesburg, S.Africa

The death of a miner at AngloGold Ashanti's Moab Khotsoeng mine on Monday brings the number of deaths in South African mines to 24 since the beginning of this year.

This month alone, 10 miners have died at work.

The worker at the mine in the Vaal River area, south of Johannesburg, died when two trains collided underground.

According to statistics supplied by the department of mining, in each of January and February there were seven mining-related fatalities.

Last year, 166 people are estimated to have been killed at mines - as against 171 in 2008.

The final number for last year is still being calculated because the circumstances of some fatal accidents are being disputed by the unions or managements.

National Union of Mineworkers spokesman Lesiba Seshoka said the union planned to intensify its call for the prosecution of mine executives in connection with mining fatalities.

Wednesday 17 March 2010

China: Officials sacked over coal mine fire tragedy

Extract from the China Daily



Luo Laoliu (right) cries over the death of her husband, Zhu Dengchun, who was killed in a coal mine fire on Monday night in Xinmi city in Zhengzhou, capital of Henan province. [Jiao Hongchang/China Daily]

25 miners killed in mine that was operating without valid license

XINMI, Henan province: A coal mine fire in central China's Henan province killed 25 miners overnight on Tuesday, leading to the removal of four local government officials.

The incident began as electric cables caught fire at 8:30 pm on Monday in a main pit of Dongxing Coal Mining Co in Xinmi city in Zhengzhou, the capital of Henan, when 31 workers were working underground, according to the information office of Zhengzhou municipal government.

Six miners were saved in a rescue operation that ended at about 2 am on Tuesday.

The dead miners were identified as migrants from the provinces of Henan, Anhui and Sichuan.

Family members of the miners arrived in the city after hearing the news, only to learn of the loss of their loved ones.

The amount of compensation to be paid to their families is still being negotiated, said Chen Xiaoying, 37, wife of Wang Hongen, who died in the accident.

Wang, a 42-year-old miner from nearby Xingyang city, was the only source of income for his family, which included his wife, two teenage sons and an 80-year-old mother.

A coal miner in Henan usually earns a monthly wage of about 2,000 yuan (\$290).

In the wake of the accident, the local government has rushed to crack down on the relevant officials and the local Dongxing coal company that owns and runs the mine, which was banned by local authorities from producing coal and was operating illegally.

The sacked officials are: Su Yingxi, a vice-mayor of Xinmi; Fan Ruihui, governor of Niudian township where the mine is located; Zhu Xinxian, another township official in charge of work safety; and Pei Guoqi, a deputy director of Xinmi coal mine bureau.

The Xinmi government also dismissed three work safety inspectors deployed by the municipal and township governments to oversee the mine.

Fu Mancang, who funds the company, has been put under criminal detention along with three

company managers. Their personal accounts and the company's accounts have been frozen.

The coal mine fire is the latest in a string of accidents, in which miners have died from exposure to fire and gas at mines under reconstruction.

Wang Shuhe, deputy director of State Administration of Coal Mine Safety, said the mine should have been undergoing repairs, but operations had resumed without a production license having been issued.

The renovations were aimed at expanding the mine's annual production capacity from 60,000 to 150,000 tons.

Mines being rebuilt are strictly banned from producing coal, but Dongxing coal company had ignored the ban by resuming production, said Wang, who also blamed a lack of supervision for the accident.

Documents from the coal mining regulatory office in Zhengzhou show that in 2009 production was prohibited at the mine over safety concerns.

Coal mining is one of Xinmi's main industries and the city has 101 mines, among which 98 are under reconstruction.

Quote of the week



"You must have control of the authorship of your own destiny. The pen that writes your life story must be held in your own hand."

Irene C. Kassorla,
(UK/USA Psychologist)

S.Africa: Rockfall claims miner at Harmony's Tshepong mine

Extract from Mining Weekly.com

JOHANNESBURG - South African gold-miner Harmony Gold said on Wednesday that a rockfall accident resulted in the death a mineworker at its Tshepong mine in the Free State.

The company said in a statement that the Department of Mineral Resources had stopped blasting operations at the mine to conduct a risk assessment.

This is the second death in South Africa's gold mines this week, with AngloGold Ashanti also reporting a fatal accident at its Moab Khotsong mine in the Vaal river area.

Thursday 18 March 2010

Three killed at Tanzania Bulyanhulu Gold Mine

Extract from Dow Jones Newswires

Tanzania's largest gold mine by reserves, the Bulyanhulu Gold Mine, will resume mining operations on Friday after closing for more than two days after a fatal accident on Tuesday, a company official said Thursday.

The resumption in output follows a period of mourning for the three miners who were killed late Tuesday in a rock fall, Africa Barrick Gold spokesman Teweli Kyari Teweli said. Africa Barrick is a unit of the Canada-based Barrick Gold Corp., which owns the mine.

The workers, who were trapped underneath a collapsing rock at the mine, according to ABG Public Relations and Communication Manager, Teweli Teweli, are Dickson Kadelema, 36, Vedastus Wilfred Tandise, 33, and Joel Matthew Nicholas, 34.

While Kadelema was a Jumbo operator at the mine employed in 2003, Tandise and Nicholas were recruited as miners in 2008 and 2007 respectively, Teweli said.

A statement released by the company early on Tuesday noted that the rock fall occurred between 2 and 3:00am, some 900 meters below ground. "The ground fell on a Jumbo machine and three employees are trapped," Teweli said in the release.

Output was suspended immediately after the accident to allow rescue efforts, which were unsuccessful. At the time of the accident, at least 800 miners were working at the mine.

"Mining operations will be suspended for a period of mourning on March 18, 2010, as a sign of respect, and are expected to be fully restored thereafter," he said.

Company data indicates that Bulyanhulu has up to 12 million ounces of gold reserves, making it the largest gold mine in the country.

Africa Barrick operates four gold mines in Tanzania and is the country's largest gold producer.

Five killed, seven injured in southwest China mine accident

Extract from People's Daily Online, china

At least five people were killed and seven injured in a coal mine accident in southwest China's Yunnan Province Tuesday, the local authorities said Wednesday.

A statement from the emergency response office of the Yunnan provincial government late Wednesday described the event only as a "gas accident."

It said the accident occurred at about 7 p.m. Tuesday in Shilin, a county administered by Kunming City, the provincial capital.

The government of Shilin said in a notice that a number of villagers from neighboring Luxi County, in Honghe Ethnic Hani and Yi Autonomous Prefecture, were illegally working in the mine when the accident occurred.

One of the injured, a woman, was in critical situation, doctors said.

Officials with the local public security and work safety supervision authorities are investigating the cause of the accident.

Friday 19 March 2010

Sierra Leone denies mine accident reports

Extract from BBC News, UK

Officials in Sierra Leone have denied reports of an accident at a gold mine.

Unconfirmed local reports suggested up to 200 people were missing - or had been killed - at the mine near the southern town of Bo.

Minister of Mineral Resources Alpha Kanu visited the site and denied an accident had occurred.

People at the mine were surprised to see him because nothing was wrong, Mr Kanu told the BBC. He dismissed the reports as "wicked rumours".



"We conducted an inspection of the area. There hasn't been any sort of accident there - not even a goat has broken a foot in that place" Mr Kanu said after visiting the mining town of Baomahun, about 40 miles (65 km) north of Bo.

Mr Kanu added he had driven down from the northern town of Makeni accompanied by military to verify the reports, following a call from the local police superintendent about the alleged collapse.

Explaining how reports on the alleged collapse emerged, he said the local police superintendent might have heard it on the local radio station, Kiss 104 FM, which had been broadcasting the story.

The mine is run by the British company Cluff Gold, the minister told the BBC.

Cluff personnel inspected the mine in Baomahun following the reports and confirmed there had been no accident there, a spokesperson for Cluff Gold in the capital city Freetown said.

Saturday 20 March 2010

QLD: Firm is fined in wake of accident

Extract from the Daily Mercury, Aus

ENGINEERING firm Bucyrus (Australia) Pty Ltd has been fined \$50,000 for a workplace accident in which was 17-year-old apprentice was injured at their Paget workshop.

The industrial accident happened on August 29, 2008, at the Bucyrus engineering workshop in Michelmore Street.

Bucyrus pleaded guilty in the Industrial Magistrate's Court in Brisbane on Thursday to failing in its workplace health and safety obligations.

The worker, 17, was trapped in mining equipment, pinned by the abdomen, for about 15 minutes.

Quick-thinking work-mates freed him before emergency crews arrived.

Paramedics took him to Mackay Base Hospital at 11.45am. He suffered chest, abdominal and suspected spinal injuries. He was conscious and talking throughout.

Fire-fighters praised the actions of the teenager's work-mates.

"Workers performed the rescue after moving the conveyor section that was trapping him," senior Mackay fire-fighter Dave Russo said at the time.

"They did a really good job. They put some good protection in place so when they did move the machinery off him it didn't hurt him further."

Bucyrus had safety procedures in place at the time but has since created specific safety rules for work on that machinery.

Bucyrus must also pay \$3000 in investigation costs and \$1000 in legal fees.

This week in mining accident history (1)

17 March 1906

Courrieres Mine

Courrieres, near Lens, France

Underground Coal Mine

Fall of coal and gas explosion

1219 dead

Source: Wellington Journal & Shrewbury News, March 17, 1906

A colliery disaster which beats all previous records so far as the death-roll is concerned occurred on Saturday in the Courrieres Mine, near Lens, in the Pas de Calais district, and resulted in a loss of over 1,200 lives. The disaster is attributed to a great fall of coal being immediately followed by a tremendous explosion of gas, a fearful burst of fire, and the usual spread of deadly afterdamp.

The day shift of about 1,800 men descended the mine at six o'clock, and it was a little before seven o'clock, or shortly after the men had begun work, that the explosion occurred. The dull subterranean thunder of the explosion was plainly heard throughout the little mining town of Courrieres, which has a population of rather more than 4,000, chiefly composed of miners' families. For a long time, owing to the fact that the great tongues of flame shot upward from the pit shafts, and that subsequently the whole pit was permeated with the suffocating after-damp, it was quite impossible to take any steps to ascertain the extent of the catastrophe, to say nothing of forming rescue parties.



The difficult and dangerous work of recovering the bodies of the dead and searching for any men still alive was continued through-out Saturday night. A crowd of about 20,000 people, many of them wives and children of the men who were at work when the disaster occurred, watched the operations. The re-turn of each party of searchers was awaited with the most intense anxiety, and when it was seen that there were none of the living amongst those brought from the pit there were heartrending cries of grief and disap-pointment. The searchers were greatly hindered by the intense heat in the pits. One of the rescuers who went down the shaft said that the scene recalled one of the battle-fields of 1870. Dead and wounded were everywhere. The scenes below were of the most awful de-scription. Bodies were found lying in heaps, and the groans issuing from these ghastly mounds showed that living men wore there. The working parties did their best to rescue those survivors, but in many cases they could not reach them, and had to leave them to their fate. By 6 p.m. 400 men had been rescued. It was then found impossible to proceed further, the galleries having fallen in, and the work of rescue was reluctantly abandoned.

Reuter's Lille correspondent, telegraphing on Sunday evening, says: — The cause of the disaster is difficult to state. The theory is advanced now that it was caused by a mixture of explosive gases coming into contact with an open miner's light, resulting in an explosion which set fire to the coal dust. Some, however, are of opinion that fire-damp was the real cause,

or possibly the collapse of some of the barriers created to cope with the fire which broke out recently in the Cour-rieres mine, where the men have always worked with naked lights.

It is officially stated that the victims of the disaster number 1,219.

Editors note: other sources have the disaster occurring on 10 March 1906 and put the death toll at 1099. 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.

A group of thirteen survivors, later known as the *rescapés*, was found by rescuers on 30 March, twenty days after the explosion, they emerged through another tunnel to the light of day, without any outside help. They had survived at first by eating the food which the victims had taken underground for their break, later by slaughtering one of the mine horses. The two eldest (39 and 40 years old) were awarded the *Légion d'honneur*, the other eleven (including three under 18 years of age) received the *Médaille d'or de courage*. A final survivor was found on 4 April 1906 thanks to a group of volunteer German mine-safety workers.

Sunday 21 March 2010

China: Three bodies found after 6 miners trapped by flooding

Extract from China Daily

GUIYANG - Three bodies were found Sunday, two days after six miners were trapped underground by a colliery flooding in southwest China's Guizhou Province, rescuers said.

The bodies were found at 7 a.m. and they had been identified as two from northwestern Shaanxi Province and one from southwestern Yunnan Province, said Chen Qing, deputy secretary-general of the government of Qianxinan Buyei and Miao Autonomous Prefecture in Guizhou.

The victims' family members had arrived at the scene, Chen said.

The rescuers were still searching for the other three missing people, said Tang Xiangqian, deputy head of the prefecture.

The flooding accident happened at around 7:20 a.m. Friday at Kexing Coal Mine in Sayu Town of Anlong County, Qianxinan Prefecture, when 30 people were working underground.

Twenty-four people escaped unharmed, and the remaining six were trapped underground.

The accident is being investigated.

Monday 22 March 2010

Mine flood traps 11 workers in central China

Extract from China.org.cn

Eleven people are trapped underground after a mine flood Monday, local authorities said.

The accident happened at 12:40 a.m. when a mine controlled by Biyang County Shunda Mining Co., Ltd. in Zhumadian City of central China's Henan Province was flooded, an official of Zhumadian municipal government said.

Rescue work has started and an investigation into the cause of the accident is underway.

The deputy county's head named Wang Xinke who was in charge of work safety has been removed, said an official of Zhumadian municipal government.

Philippines: 40 miners hurt as bus plunges into 60-ft. ravine in ComVal

Extract from mb.com.ph

A total of 40 miners were injured when the bus they were riding in fell into a 60-foot ravine in Maco, Compostela Valley, a local police commander said Monday.

Senior Superintendent Aaron Aquino, director of the Compostela Valley Police Office, said all the

victims were on their way home from the Barangay Maligay mining site of Apex Mining Company.

Quoting field reports, Aquino said the accident occurred while the bus the victims were riding in was giving way to other vehicles to pass by a narrow road in Barangay Masara at around 3:30 p.m. on Sunday.

The bus, he said, was hired by the mining firm to transport its employees to the Barangay Masara proper.

"While the bus was on a standby, the portion of the soil on its front wheel collapsed and caused the vehicle to roll down the deep ravine," said Aquino.

"The ravine is approximately 60 feet deep, the reason why some of the victims sustained serious injuries," he added.

Fortunately, the two other vehicles in front of the bus were not affected, said Aquino.

The official said the accident inflicted injuries to all the 40 people on board the bus. They were all taken to the nearby hospitals.

Aquino said 24 of the passengers were taken to the Tagum Doctors Hospital while the rest were transferred to the Bishop Regan Hospital, both in Tagum City.

Gas poisoning kills 5 in SW China coal mine

Extract from China Daily

KUNMING: Five people are dead after inhaling poisonous gas while stealing coal from an abandoned mine in southwest China's Yunnan Province Sunday, local authorities said Monday.

Hu Liubao and Niu Jianzhi led Zhao Xiaoyun, Leng Zhenxian, Yang Xiaochang and Yang Taoxian in extracting coal from the mine in Fuyuan County, Qujing City, said the county's information office in a statement.

All except Niu went down the shaft at around 5 pm Sunday and were found dead. The poisonous gas had yet to be identified, it said.

Police have detained Niu and Yunnan Coal Mine Safety Supervision Bureau is investigating the accident.

This week in mining accident history (2)

23 March 1887

Bulli Colliery

Bulli, NSW, Australia

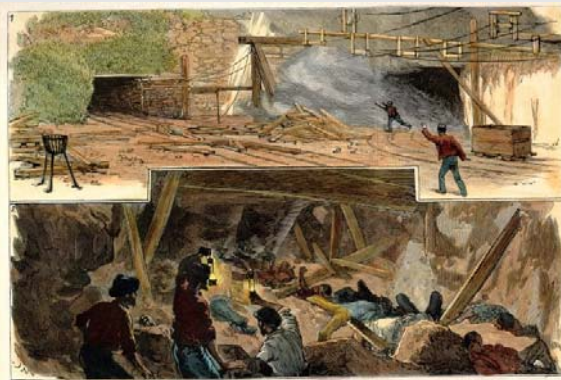
Underground Coal Mine

Gas explosion

81 killed

Source <http://www.illawarracoal.com/bullidisaster.htm>

At 2.30pm on Wednesday, March 23rd, 1887, an explosion in the mine blew out of the tunnel mouth carrying with it an unconscious boy, Herbert Cope. Eighty one bodies were recovered and subsequently buried at St. Augustine's Church of England, with eight at Fairy Meadow Roman Catholic cemetery (Corrimal), some at Woonona churchyard and the unidentified at Bulli.



Contemporary engraving of Bulli Colliery Explosion

Bulli Colliery was a "gassy" pit having high concentrations of "firedamp" (methane) within its coal. Bleeding off into the mine workings, this gas was diluted and removed to the surface by the circulating air of the ventilation system before it accumulated and formed an inflammable mix (methane is inflammable within the approximate range of 5 - 15% when mixed

with air so the object is to maintain the gas concentration well below the 5% level).

It was common practice to remove the safety gauze from around the flame to permit more light from the lamp

The source of the explosion was in the "Hill End" headings, known to be gassy and subject to gas "blowers". Not helped by the fact that the men working these headings had become casual towards the presence of gas and compounded by a deputy who apparently tolerated the use of unlocked lamps in contravention of "The Coal Fields Regulation Act", regulations that required all gas to be reported immediately to management and that locked oil flame safety lamps be used in gassy mines.



Bulli Colliery, circa 1914 (Photo I&I NSW)

Although oil flame safety lamps were in use at the time, it apparently was common practice to remove the safety gauze from around the flame to permit more light from the lamp as this was the miners' only light source. In addition shots were being initiated by lighting the fuse from the open flame of the lamp or by matches.

The special commission and jury was quite scathing in its findings blaming both the miners and management for their attitude towards safety. Even the Government Inspector of Mines showed a lack of information as to what was happening at the mine.

The conclusion reached by the commission was "that the explosion was caused by marsh gas or

carbonic hydrate that had accumulated at the face. That the immediate cause was probably the flame from an overcharged shot fired by a miner in the coal in No. 2 Heading."

This gas explosion propagated a coal dust explosion and travelled towards the fresh air at the surface. The commission was also of the opinion that the Deputy, Overman and to a lesser extent the Manager, were all guilty of contributing negligence.

The last surviving widow died in 1942 and the sole survivor, Herbert Cope, died in 1952, aged 84.

Wednesday 24 March 2010

Rescuers struggle to plug flooded N China mine

Extract from China Daily

HOHHOT - Chinese mining experts are still unable to control water flowing into a coal mine where 32 workers were killed in a flooding accident on March 1 in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region.

"Large pumping machines have been working day in and day out pumping water out of the Luotuoshan mine at 3,850 cubic meters per hour since the accident. However, the amount of water in the mine remains at 100,000 cubic meters," said Hu Weiyue, a coal science expert.

By Wednesday, more than 1.06 million cubic meters of water had been pumped out from the flooded mine, he said.

Hu said workers had met the so-call "underground current", or Ordovician limestone water, which came from Ordovician geological structure, formed 400 million to 500 million years ago.

"It is very rare to see Ordovician water outbursts in arid northwest China regions. Actually, it is the first time that we have seen such a large scale Ordovician water inrush in the region," said Hu, who is also deputy director of the Xi'an

Research Institute of the China Academy of Coal Science.

The rescue work, the country's largest coal mine rescue mobilization, took 14 days and involved 40 professional rescue teams comprising 20,384 people, said Hu.

Lan Yi, spokesman of the rescue headquarters, declared the rescue efforts ended on March 14, as no signs of life had been detected during the two-week rescue.

Cao Anya, director of the Inner Mongolia Coal Mine Production Safety Bureau, said the accident was a warning for coal mining workers to review studies of the hydrogeological structure in the region.

He said an investigation by the bureau found the threat of Ordovician water could affect 32 mines in the western area of Inner Mongolia.

Professor Hu said workers were trying to seal the 400-meter deep flooded mine with a mixture of cement, rubble and water-glass. However, the mixture had no obvious effect on blocking the water inrush.

Rescue headquarters spokesman Lan Yi said workers hoped to seal the mine pit by April 4 with 50 million cubic meters of prepared sealing materials. By Wednesday, a fifth of the materials had been put in.

"Filling a flooded coal mine is still a conundrum worldwide. We cannot be sure whether the current effort can solve the problem," he said.

Inner Mongolia is China's coal heartland. It's verified coal deposits of 732 billion tons is much greater than the 250 billion tons in Shanxi province, China's biggest producer of the fossil fuel.

Its coal output hit 600 million tons in 2009. The output is projected to be about 700 million tons in 2010.

The Luotuoshan Coal Mine is owned by Wuhai Energy Co Ltd under Shenhua Group Corp Ltd, the country's largest coal producer.

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

USA: One killed, one injured in Tompkins County salt bin collapse

Extract from NewsChannel 9 WSYR, USA

Lansing (WSYR-TV) - A salt bin collapse near Ithaca killed one man and injured another.

Tompkins County Sheriff's Department says the structural collapse of the salt bin happened around 6:30 Wednesday night at the Cargill Salt Mine in Lansing. A hoist operator has been rescued, and now they are planning to use rigging cranes to retrieve the body of the man who was killed.

Mark Klein, Manager of Communications for the Cargill Salt Mine, confirmed the information from Tompkins County Sheriff's Department, and added that the bin was loading salt into a truck at the time of the collapse. "We're very concerned and we're working with authorities to investigate how this happened. When it happened, we stopped production and sent people home. We'll start up when it's appropriate, but right now the focus is on looking at what happened."

Klein did not have information on the identities of either man involved in the accident.

Thursday 25 March 2010

Turkey: Mining accident claims one miner in Black Sea province

Extract from the Daily News & Economic Review,

One miner is dead after a cave-in at a privately owned coal mine near the Black Sea port of Zonguldak early Thursday.

The cave-in killed one miner while injuring another at the mine owned and operated by Zirve Mining. An investigation into the incident in Zonguldak province's Kilimli district has been started.

Turkey has a bad record in mining accidents. Incidents are not uncommon in Turkish mines due to safety violations and outdated equipment.

Last December, 19 miners were killed in a mine that collapsed after an explosion in the western province of Bursa. Three years ago, 17 miners were killed in a methane gas explosion at a coalmine in western Balıkesir province. In Turkey's worst mining disaster, a gas explosion killed 270 workers, again in Zonguldak, in 1992.

9 miners trapped after gas explosion in N China

Extract from China Daily

SHIJIAZHUANG - Nine people were trapped underground following gas explosion Thursday in a colliery in north China's Hebei province, local work safety authorities said.

The accident occurred at about 1 pm at Dadi Coal Mine in Chengde county of Chengde city, according to the provincial work safety administration.

The mine's production license expired in June 2006, and was suspended from production for rectification, the administration said.

The mine has an annual production capacity of 40,000 tons.

Rescue work had been launched.

Investigation into the cause of the accident is underway

Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

T

tail race An artificial channel that drains a sluicing claim or conveys used water and tailings away from a mill, battery or other processing plant. Often a sluice box or riffles is placed at the head of the tail race to capture any residue mineral in the tailings.

-Ed