



Mining Accident News No.1106

15 to 24 February 2011

In this issue:

| | |
|--|----|
| Canada: Sudbury contractor killed at Xstrata's Kidd Mine..... | 1 |
| QLD: Three workers taken to hospital with injuries after truck tyre explodes at Peak Downs coal mine | 1 |
| USA: Obama budget adds an MSHA district for W.Va. | 2 |
| USA: Employee dies in Arizona mine accident. 3 | 3 |
| NSW: Fire quickly brought under control at Perilya | 3 |
| This week in mining accident history | 4 |
| USA: The latest results of MSHA 'impact' inspections..... | 6 |
| S.Africa: Simmers says worker killed at Buffelsfontein, another injured..... | 7 |
| S.Africa: One Exxaro employee dies in fatal accident | 8 |
| USA: No one hurt in equipment accident at mine | 8 |
| Report highlights Queensland mine safety | 8 |
| Quote of the week | 9 |
| Nambia: Namdeb stops production after second fatality | 9 |
| Mexico Rights Agency Calls for Recovery of Miners' Bodies | 10 |
| QLD: Road deaths prompt call for mine fatigue crackdown | 11 |
| Canada: Worker killed at uranium mine site.... | 11 |
| QLD: Mine industry making 'progress' to cut fatigue-related deaths..... | 11 |
| USA: Guilty Plea Imminent for WV Coal Miner? | 12 |
| Mining dictionary | 12 |

Monday 14 February 2011

Canada: Sudbury contractor killed at Xstrata's Kidd Mine

Extract from Northern Ontario Business

A 28-year-old Sudbury-area man employed by contractor J.S. Redpath Limited was killed in a mining accident at Xstrata's Kidd Mine in Timmins on Jan. 7.

Richard Roy suffered a "crushing injury to his chest," according to Matt Blajer, a spokesperson for the Ministry of Labour.

Blajer said Roy was using a jackleg drill to drill a wall support, while standing on a platform 250 feet above the 8,200 foot level of the mine, when the accident occurred.

The ministry is still trying to determine how Roy came to be injured, Blajer said. Meanwhile, a "stop work order" has been issued for that part of the mine while the investigation is underway.

He said the investigation is proceeding slowly because the part of the mine where the incident occurred is remote, and the transport mechanism to get to that area can only carry one passenger at a time.

Redpath has also been ordered to provide documentation on the training of employees who work in that part of the mine.

Tuesday 15 February 2011

QLD: Three workers taken to hospital with injuries after truck tyre explodes at Peak Downs coal mine

Extract from couriermail.com.au

THREE workers at an open-cut coal mine in North Queensland have been taken to hospital after they were caught in the path of a tyre explosion.

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

Editor: Mark Freeman
e mark.freeman@industry.nsw.gov.au

A tyre on a water truck at BHP Billiton's Peak Downs mine burst just moments after it was moved to a workshop area for repairs at 1.20pm.

They were taken to Moranbah Hospital for treatment and observation. An ambulance spokesman said the three people were suffering facial injuries.

Their injuries were not life threatening, according to a Mines and Energy spokesperson for the Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation.

"The Queensland Mines Inspectorate is investigating an incident today in which a tyre blew on a water truck at BMA's Peak Downs open-cut coal mine," the spokesperson said.

"The incident occurred when a water truck, which is used to spray water on mine roads to keep the dust down, was moved to a workshop area for repairs and a tyre burst.

"Three workers were in the path of the air outburst but their injuries are not life-threatening."

A BMA spokesperson said two employees were treated for minor abrasions at Moranbah Hospital.

"BMA has informed the Queensland Mines Inspectorate of the incident and an investigation has commenced."

"The company will work with the inspectorate in the investigation."

The mine is 30km south of Moranbah and 195km south-west of Mackay.

It produces nine million tonnes of coking coal every year.

USA: Obama budget adds an MSHA district for W.Va.

Extract from Charleston Gazette, USA

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- The Obama administration plans to split its Southern West Virginia operations into two separate district offices in the wake of the Upper Big Branch

Mine Disaster and other, recurring problems at its existing District 4 operation.

The move follows through on a proposal that Joe Main, assistant secretary of labor for the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration, floated in a congressional hearing just weeks after 29 miners died in the April 5, 2010, explosion at the Massey Energy operation.

As part of its proposal to increase MSHA's overall budget by about 5 percent -- to \$394 million -- the White House included \$634,000 to cover costs of essentially creating a second district office.

The Obama budget contains additional money to help reduce a backlog of appealed enforcement cases, fund MSHA's efforts to eliminate black lung disease, and hire 30 new agency staffers.

During a budget briefing Monday, Main and Labor Secretary Hilda Solis declined to answer questions about the reasons for creating the new West Virginia district, and budget documents released so far provide only a glimpse at the administration's thinking.

"Of the 11 districts, District 4 has the most employees and the most significant workload with the smallest ratio of supervisory staff to line employees," MSHA said in one report called a budget justification. "It has become too large to effectively manage."

After two miners died five years ago in the January 2006 fire at Massey's Aracoma Mine in Logan County, an internal MSHA review report blasted inadequate inspections and enforcement of the mine and poor supervision by MSHA management.

But problems in District 4 had started before Aracoma and continued afterward.

Serious problems were found after a January 1991 fire that killed two workers, and a 1996 MSHA report warned the region had a disproportionate level of mining deaths compared to its coal production. And after the Aracoma fire, a November 2007 Inspector

General's report found that MSHA's problems with completing required inspections were concentrated in District 4.

Currently, MSHA polices mining operations out of a District 4 office based in Mount Hope. That headquarters oversees field offices in Logan, Madison, Mount Carbon, Pineville, Princeton and Summersville. Mines in Northern West Virginia are handled by a separate, Morgantown-based district office.

Budget documents show the split would create a new district office in Pineville that would oversee field operations out of Logan and Welch. The Mount Hope district would manage field offices in Mount Carbon, Summersville and Madison, the budget documents show.

Last year, MSHA had told Congress that its proposal to split up District 4 into two district offices would cost more than \$1 million and take 16 to 24 months to complete.

Main told lawmakers at the time that Southern West Virginia has the highest concentration of underground mines in the country, the most MSHA employees and the "most significant workload with the smallest ratio of supervisory staff to line employees."

"Its workload is almost 50 percent higher than the next busiest district in many key indicators such as contested citations and plan approvals," Main told a Senate Appropriations subcommittee in May 2010. "In order for management to be best able to spot problem or potentially problematic mines and react responsibly, it would seem that dividing this district into two districts of better management sizes would be the best approach."

Main later cited his proposal for splitting the district in response to an Inspector General's report that harshly criticized MSHA for in March 2009 dropping problem mines -- especially in Southern West Virginia -- from consideration for tougher enforcement action because of "resource limitations."

"A better response would have been to split District 4, so that all of the mines that need attention can receive attention," Main said in a June 2010 news release. "We have advocated for exactly that and are exploring ways to accomplish it. This is a better approach to handle the workload issues in District 4."

USA: Employee dies in Arizona mine accident

Extract from AZ Central.com

KAYENTA - Authorities are investigating the death of a Kayenta Mine employee in an accident.

Mine officials say Roy Black was driving a service vehicle that collided with a piece of road maintenance equipment Friday afternoon.

A spokeswoman for Peabody Energy couldn't immediately provide an age or hometown for Black but says he worked for the mining operation for 30 years at the northern Arizona mine.

Coal from the Kayenta Mine comes from the Navajo and Hopi reservations and supplies the Navajo Generating Station near Page.

Peabody Energy officials said Monday that the mine was immediately shut down after the fatal accident, but has since resumed operations.

They say the incident is being investigated by mine officials and the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration.

Wednesday 16 February 2011

NSW: Fire quickly brought under control at Perilya

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

The South Broken Hill Fire Brigade was called to Perilya's operations yesterday to assist in extinguishing a fire.

The blaze broke out in the primary screen building during maintenance work.

Perilya's Broken Hill mine manager Andrew Lord Mr says hot metal generated from an oxytorch is believed to have started the fire.

"We'll be doing a thorough investigation to make sure that we understand how and why this happened, to make sure these things don't happen again.

"But the positive side, as I say, was that the response from our own team and from the South Fire Brigade was first rate," he said.

Mr Lord says only minor damage was sustained, and is predicted to take a day to repair.

"The Deluge System in the building was activated, our mine control people were informed and they also advised our own fire and rescue group and the South Fire Brigade, who also attended the scene.

"The deluge system had the fire under control very quickly and we were very grateful for the assistance of South Fire Brigade."

This week in mining accident history

15 February 1901

Hill of Beath Colliery

Dunfermline, Fife, Scotland, UK

Underground coal mine

7 dead, underground fire

Source: www.scotishmining.co.uk

On 15th February 1901 an underground fire at Hill of Beath Colliery, owned by Fife Coal Co, caused the death by suffocation of seven men

List of Dead

- Robert Birrell, 33, oversman
- Andrew Nasmyth, 34, fireman (NB given as Alexander in report below)
- Alexander Carr 43, oncostman
- Patrick McRoberts, 30 oncostman
- James McFarlane, 44, oncostman
- Martin McTearn, 36, oncostman NB given as Rennie in report below)
- James Reid, 35, miner.

Report by J B Atkinson, Inspector of Mines for East Scotland District

Underground fire - Hill of Beath Colliery

The Lochgelly Splint and Parrot seam in Fife is subject to spontaneous combustion, and gases from a fire of this nature in the east section of workings of the Hill of Beath Colliery led to the loss of seven lives on 15th February 1901.

The following is a section of the seam: -

Coal and blaes 6ft 0inches - not worked

Coal top 5ft 0 inches - Lochgelly splint

Blaes 2ft 6 inches

Coal bottom 3 ft 6 inches Lochgelly Parrot

The seam is worked long wall in two carries; the bottom coal is worked first and the top coal is then taken out from same roads. The inclination of the seam is about 1 in 7. East section is separated from other sections of the Colliery by a fault across which there are only two roads, one the intake and haulage road, and the other the return airway. The ventilating current passing along the intake when last measured before the accident amounted to 9652 cubic feet per minute and passed in one current round the faces. It was stated that there was little loss of air, most of the current reached the working face. The seam is free from firedamp and coal dust, and naked lights were used throughout.

In July 1900 a fire broke out in the section and the miners were shortly afterwards removed nearer the shaft, and in September stoppings were built in both the in take and return airways to isolate it. These stoppings consisted of two rough walls of stone 2 ft thick and 2 ft apart, the space been packed with redd and the outer wall clayed over. The stoppings appear to have damped the fire to some extent.

In December 1900 a second fire, or possibly an extension of the first fire, broke out, and mining operations had to be again moved nearer the shaft. The second outbreak was isolated by a line of five stoppings built as follows: next the fire was nine feet of stone and redd, then one foot of clay, and lastly 9 inches of brickwork.

These stoppings were watched, and any cracks clayed up, and it was hoped that no air was reaching the fire, a hope which the sequel showed was not well-founded.

On 14th February 1901, a smell as from a fire was felt in the section, and on the 15th the oversman, Robert Birrell, reported this to the manager, Mr Richardson, who gave orders for Birrell and Alexander Nasmyth, the fireman of the section, to make a particular examination of the stoppings, and try and locate the issue of gases that day.

After work stopped about 2pm Birrell and Nasmyth made their examination, and then appear to have travelled to the shaft by the return airway. As they did not return to the surface the alarm was raised, and a search party consisting of W E Richardson, manager, James Grandison, miner, James Reid, miner, Alexander Carr, miner, Patrick Manson McRoberts, miner, and James McFarlane, rope splicer, descended the shaft about 4pm and proceeded into the section by the intake airway. They passed the stoppings, and waited a few minutes in the air current. Mr Richardson stated at the inquiry that there was no consultation as to danger from gases, but he suggested they should halt, and see if their breathing was affected. After a few minutes halt, and feeling no difficulty as to breathing, they commenced to travel out by the return airway, and when Mr Richardson, who led, had gone about 135 yards he found his breathing affected, and at once turned and told all the others to turn. Mr Richardson struggled back and managed to get into fresh air beyond the issue of the gas when he became unconscious. Carr, McRoberts, Rennie, and McFarlane did not get clear of the issue and were all lost.

Grandison managed to retrace his steps to a point of safety.

The search party not returning other parties descended the shaft, a member of one of these, Martin Rennie, miner, proceeded too far and was overcome by the gas and perished.

Mr Rowen, the general manager of the West section of the Fife Coal Companies Collieries, having arrived at the scene descended the shaft, provided with two canaries in cages to be used as a test, and in consultation with Mr Riddell, manager under the Fife Coal Company at Cowdenbeath Colliery, prudently decided to run no more risk but reverse the air current, and so get to the bodies. This was accomplished, and the bodies of Birrell and Nasmyth were recovered first, separated from each other by about 20 yards, and about two-thirds of the distance to the shaft by the return airway. The bodies of the rescuers were found near the face - the last being recovered about 2:30am on the 16th, when it was decided to isolate the district by building stoppings in the intake and return airways near the drawing shaft.

The stoppings were built the same night, and when I arrived at the colliery the next day no entry could be made to the section which is still isolated.

It is evident that air was reaching the fire, and that the products of combustion were entering the air current, and no doubt carbonic oxide was present. Dr Nasmyth who examined the bodies, and saw the affected survivors, was of the opinion that the cause of death and prostration was carbonic oxide.

The stoppings were not sufficiently tight to isolate the fire, or air was passing to it through cracks in the strata.

The oversman and firemen were not instructed to examine the return airway, and may have decided to travel to the shaft in it as the shortest route, and because there was less difficulty in carrying a light in it going with the air than in the intake going against the air; they probably had no thought of danger although a little knowledge as to the probability of carbonic oxide being present might have deterred them.

When Mr Richardson decided to go into the return airway he appears to have had some idea that the air might be vitiated but had no certain

evidence, and the test made by waiting a few minutes did not indicate danger. He and his party were engaged in rescue work when some risk must be encountered, and notwithstanding the sad result I do not think any blame can be attached to him; he led the party, and subjected himself to the same risk as the others.

The accident however, clearly indicate that great care is necessary in entering airways into which gases from an underground fire are finding an entrance. If the only reliable precaution at present known is to use mice or birds as indicators of the purity of the air. The blood of the small animal being more quickly saturated by the carbonic oxide it collapses before a man is affected, and so allows some time to retreat.

Mr Rowan, when he first went in by the intake and got past the stoppings, found the canaries affected when he himself felt no ill-effect, and while the air was being reversed the canaries were made use of by the leading man, and they dropped motionless in their cages on several occasions when carried well forward.

Before this fire, at other fires in an adjoining pit, Mr Rowan made use of palladium chloride as a test for carbonic oxide, and found on several occasions that the gases from a fire blackened the blotting paper on which the solution of palladium chloride was poured immediately before the test was made, but he had not previously used the bird test.

Since the accident mice have been used regularly for testing purposes in other sections of the collieries troubled with fires, and with satisfactory results. As regards the palladium chloride test I am informed by Dr Haldane, of Oxford University, that although it is a very delicate test for carbonic oxide, other gases have also the effect of blackening it.

Mr Rowan informs me, in his experience, all the fires in the Lochgelly Splint and Parrot seam occur during the working of the upper portion of the seam; and he supposed them to be due to the heating of the overlying coal and blaes after

it has fallen. The extraction of the bottom part of the seam naturally cracks and rends the overlying strata and it is found almost impossible in ordinary long wall workings to exclude air from fires by stoppings, and this points to the advisability of leaving barriers of solid coal between sections of workings, so that in case of fire stoppings can be built in places with solid coal on each side, and this system is being adopted by him as far as possible.

Thursday 17 February 2011

USA: The latest results of MSHA 'impact' inspections

Extract from Charleston Gazette's Coal Tattoo Blog

Here's the latest from the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration:

The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration today announced that federal inspectors issued 377 citations and orders during special impact inspections conducted at 15 coal and seven metal/nonmetal mine operations last month. The coal mines were issued 208 citations and seven orders; the metal/nonmetal mines were issued 148 citations and 14 orders.

These inspections, which began in force last April following the explosion at Upper Big Branch Mine, involve mines that merit increased agency attention and enforcement due to their poor compliance history or particular compliance concerns, including high numbers of violations or closure orders; indications of operator tactics, such as advance notification of inspections that prevent inspectors from observing violations; frequent hazard complaints or hotline calls; plan compliance issues; inadequate workplace examinations; a high number of accidents, injuries or illnesses; fatalities; and adverse conditions such as increased methane liberation, faulty roof conditions and inadequate ventilation.

"Some mine operators have begun to show signs of improvement, while others continue to

demonstrate poor compliance with safety and health laws,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health.

On Jan. 14, an inspection party arrived at Manalapan Mining Co. Inc.’s RB No. 12 Mine in Harlan County, Ky., during the evening shift. The inspectors captured and monitored the phones after production had started to prevent advance notification of their arrival. They issued 24 104(a) citations and three 104(d)(2) orders, the majority of which are related to not examining and maintaining electrical equipment. Such violations may create electrical hazards and potentially expose miners to electrocution. Other violations included accumulations of combustible materials inside a power center and one along a conveyor belt, which could lead to an explosion. Inspectors also found unsafe rib and roof conditions, which could result in a roof fall.

MSHA found three defective and one properly operating handheld multi-gas detectors. One 104(d)(2) order was issued when one of the mine’s pre-shift examiners was encountered in an outby area with his handheld multi-gas detector turned off. When turned on, it was found to be defective. Further investigation revealed the detector had not been calibrated for almost two months. This condition resulted in another 104(d)(2) order, since handheld detectors are required to be calibrated every 31 days. Two other handheld detectors were turned off and had dead batteries. Inoperable, non-calibrated and defective multi-gas detectors increase the risk that explosive mixtures of methane or low oxygen could go undetected, resulting in a mine explosion or unsafe levels of oxygen in the air. A 104(d)(2) order was issued on a front-end loader operated on the surface for allowing combustible materials to accumulate on the engine, exhaust system and other parts.

Beginning Jan. 19, MSHA inspectors conducted an impact inspection at the Queenstake Resources USA’s Jerritt Canyon Mill in Elko County, Nev. They issued 24 citations and seven 104(d)(2) orders. Two of the 104(d)(2)

orders were issued in conjunction with a 107(a) imminent danger order. One 104(d)(2) order was issued for the operator’s failure to examine each working place at least once per shift for conditions that may adversely affect safety or health. A second 104(d)(2) order was issued in conjunction with a 107(a) order, for operating equipment that posed hazards to miners. A 107(a) order was issued in a lab in which inspectors detected a strong, irritating odor and white mist/vapors coming off a heated tray inside a ventilation hood. A sample was taken immediately, indicating that nitric acid potential exposure was above the established short-term exposure limit. The health risks from overexposure include severe lung damage, such as pulmonary edema.

Since April 2010, MSHA has conducted 220 impact inspections. These inspections have resulted in 4,114 citations, 384 orders and 13 safeguards.

A summary of the inspection results at:

http://www.msha.gov/Media/PRESS/2011/NR110216_link_spreadsheet.pdf

S.Africa: Simmers says worker killed at Buffelsfontein, another injured

Extract from www.miningweekly.com

JOHANNESBURG – Gold and uranium producer Simmer & Jack Mines (Simmers) shut down operations at its Buffelsfontein operation on Thursday, following a fatal accident.

The company said that the accident, involving explosive material, at its number seven shaft had claimed the life of one mineworker and left another seriously injured.

“All work at the affected area will be stopped until a full enquiry had been completed,” it added.

Friday 18 February 2011

S.Africa: One Exxaro employee dies in fatal accident

Extract from www.steelguru.com

Diversified resources group Exxaro Resources Limited regrets to announce that an employee at its New Clydesdale coal mine in Mpumalanga died last night in an underground accident.

A preliminary investigation indicates that shuttle car operator Mandla Piet Mabaso, 40, was fatally injured while moving coal from the continuous mining equipment. An investigation is underway to confirm the cause of the accident.

Mr Siphon Nkosi CEO of Exxaro said that "On behalf of management and employees at Exxaro, I extend my sincere condolences to the family, colleagues and friends of Mr Mabaso."

USA: No one hurt in equipment accident at mine

Extract from www.oca.com

No one was hurt earlier this week when a dragline excavator tumbled into a pit at the Steven Counts, Inc. — Clifton Mine on Northwest 27th Avenue.

The vehicle is underwater but standing upright at the bottom of the pit, according to the Florida Department of Environmental Protection spokeswoman Dee Ann Miller.

Bob Struyk, who works for the mining company, said no one was injured in the Tuesday accident. The excavator is slightly larger than a bulldozer.

Miller said no oil was seen on the water's surface and the company is waiting for clearance from the onsite Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) representative before it can take water samples to verify that hydrocarbons are not a concern.

Miller said the pit was not connected to off-site surface waters, so there were no immediate

concerns that the water in the pit would create problems for other water bodies.

The company's plan is to have divers assess the sunken equipment Monday before later dismantling it and recovering it from the pit.

Report highlights Queensland mine safety

Extract from mysunshinecoast.com.au

Queensland continues to have one of the safest mining industries in the world, Mines and Energy Minister Stephen Robertson said today.

Mr Robertson said the latest annual Queensland Mines and Quarries Safety Performance and Health Report shows improvements across most key measures of safety and health during 2009-10.

"Queensland has the toughest mining safety laws in the world and is committed to minimising risk so that every worker returns home safe at the end of every shift," Mr Robertson said.

"While this report reflects the dedicated commitment to safety and health issues by the mining and resource sectors and its workers, we can always still do more to improve safety."

Queensland suffered one fatality in the industry during 2009-10 - a vehicle-related accident in a quarry - compared to four industry fatalities the previous year, the report shows.

Work-related injuries in the mining industry also fell in key performance areas of severity, duration and days lost to injury.

Medical treatments dropped from 924 to 546 injuries while lost time injuries fell from 301 to 285 injuries. There were 413 disabling injuries, down from 417 the previous year.

"A most important safety and health indicator - the lost time injury plus disabling injury duration rate - fell from 41.4 days to 28.1 days per injury.

"The lost time injury plus disabling injury severity rate was also down, from 337 to 239 days lost per million hours worked."

Mr Robertson said while the number of high potential incidents rose from 1022 to 1751, this increase demonstrated better reporting of such incidents by industry operators.

"The State Government Mines Inspectorate has made a concerted effort to ensure industry reports these incidents so their causes are fully investigated to ensure they do not reoccur," he said.

"Mines inspectors conducted nearly four times as many audits during 2009-10 (243) compared to the previous year (65), and the number of inspections increased from 1508 to 1535."

Mr Robertson said the government is partnering industry in a number of initiatives to further improve health and safety in mining.

"My department's Mining Safety and Health division is working closely with industry to implement proximity detection systems into vehicle fleets to reduce the risk of vehicle-related accidents; as well as training to minimise the impact of vibration on workers operating vehicles.

"We are also working to enhance industry awareness about dust issues and improve dust reduction strategies in the industry, particularly at quarrying operations.

"Importantly, we are improving health surveillance systems to address worker fatigue that can lead to accidents.

"The department has also assisted small mines to develop safety and health management systems to meet new legislative requirements that came into force in September 2010," he said.

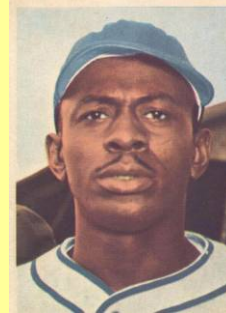
A copy of the 2009-10 Queensland Mines and Quarries Safety Performance and Health Report is available at:

www.dme.qld.gov.au/mines/qld_mines_quarries_safety_performance_health_report.cfm

Minister for Natural Resources, Mines and Energy and Minister for Trade

The Honourable Stephen Robertson.

Quote of the week



"How old would you be if you didn't know how old you are?"

Satchel Paige
(American baseball pitcher, 1906-1982)

Monday 21 February 2011

Nambia: Namdeb stops production after second fatality

Extract from The Namibian

ALL production has been stopped at Namdeb's Oranjemund mine after an accident claimed the life of an employee on Friday.

Theophilus Makili died at about 12h00 on Friday when the truck he was driving overturned.

According to Namdeb's brand manager, Pauline Thomas, investigations into the accident have not been concluded. She said it is suspected that Makili lost control of the truck.

The 24-year-old multi-skilled operator was instantly killed when the truck overturned on the gravel road between the Oranjemund gate and Chameis road – some 7 km from the Oranjemund gate. He had joined the mine less than a year ago.

Questions are now being asked about the safety at the mine as this is the second fatality this year.

On January 12, another employee drowned when the vehicle he was driving plunged into the sea.

At the time, Karas Police Commissioner Josephat Abel, said the accident happened when the deceased, Tsikongo Klemens (32),

was driving through the mining area performing his duties.

Abel explained that there are old roads in the mining area where mining operations took place next to the sea. Many of the roads are closed.

He said: "It seems that Klemens drove down one of these roads and before he could react, he drove his company vehicle into the water. He drowned in the vehicle."

A team of divers had to remove Klemens from the vehicle. The vehicle was then hoisted out of the water.

Commissioner Abel then alleged that there are no signs warning workers not to use the road, nor was there a sand barrier put in the road to stop vehicles from entering.

"It was a freak accident and very tragic. The deceased did not, nor could have, seen that the road ended in the sea," he said.

Thomas yesterday said all mine operations have been stopped to enable Namdeb to "reassess all its safety systems".

Asked what financial impact the closure would have on the mine, Thomas said: "Safety comes first."

Wednesday 23 February 2011

Mexico Rights Agency Calls for Recovery of Miners' Bodies

Extract from the Latin American Herald Tribune

MEXICO CITY – The National Human Rights Commission, or CNDH, called for the recovery of the bodies of the miners who died five years ago at the Pasta de Conchos coal mine in Sabinas, a city in the northern Mexican state of Coahuila.

The CNDH, Mexico's equivalent of an ombudsman's office, released a statement on Saturday marking the 5th anniversary of Mexico's worst mining accident.

A collapse caused by an explosion at the Pasta de Conchos mine killed 65 miners on Feb. 19, 2006.

The bodies of 63 of the miners ended up buried at the mine despite pleas from their families and the SNTMM mine workers union that they be recovered.

Recovering the bodies "is an outstanding debt to the families of the victims," the CNDH said.

A group of experts working for the Labor and Social Security Secretariat concluded that recovering the bodies would be impossible because of safety concerns.

"The necessary efforts (should be made) to recover the miners' bodies, since this constitutes a violation of the freedom of belief and religion of the survivors," the CNDH said.

A new complaint about the Pasta de Conchos case and four others dealing with human rights violations at other mines in Mexico are currently being investigated, the CNDH said.

The government also marked the anniversary of the mining accident.

"In accordance with the scientific evidence, it would be extremely dangerous to carry out any kind of human activity" at the mine, "making an attempt at the recovery of the (bodies of the) workers impossible," Labour Secretary Javier Lozano said in a statement on Saturday.

The federal labour rights prosecutor's office worked with 58 of the 65 families affected by the accident, helping them obtain "compensation well above that required by the law" of more than 1.34 million pesos (about \$111,666), "when, legally, the sum should not have been even one-fifth of that," Lozano said.

The government has increased the number of national mining inspectors from 218 to 376 since the accident and levied fines of 16.3 million pesos (\$1.3 million) against companies that violated regulations, the labour secretary said.

"We recently closed a work site, the 'Lulu' mine, and we are working on closing another mine," Lozano said.

The SNTMM mine workers union labelled the Pasta de Conchos accident "industrial homicide" and blamed mine operator Grupo Mexico, which is owned by billionaire German Larrea, for the miners' deaths.

QLD: Road deaths prompt call for mine fatigue crackdown

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

A central Queensland coroner has made 24 recommendations to address fatigue on roads and in the mining industry.

Coroner Annette Hennessy has handed down her findings relating to two separate road crashes in central Queensland involving coal miners driving home from work.

She found driver fatigue was a factor in both crashes but bad weather was the main contributor to a crash that claimed two lives near Yeppoon in 2005.

The other crash was near Dysart in 2007.

Ms Hennessy recommended measures to identify fatigue both on the mine site and on the road and guidelines to take into account commuting time in mine fatigue management.

She also called for more police resources in the Bowen Basin and possible laws to make driver fatigue an offence or for officers to be empowered to order motorists to have a rest.

Canada: Worker killed at uranium mine site

Extract from bclocalnews.com

A 54-year-old employee of an Aldergrove drilling company was killed in a northern Saskatchewan mining accident Monday morning.

The unnamed employee of DJ Drilling (2004) Ltd. died when the D-6 Cat bulldozer he was operating fell through ice into 60 feet of water at Cree Lake at the CanAlaska Uranium Mine.

Police said the accident occurred at about 9 a.m., Feb. 21, when the victim was clearing snow off a patch of ice.

Two RCMP officers chartered a plane to the mine site from the nearest detachment at Buffalo Narrows, which is 600 kilometres southwest of Cree Lake by road.



[CanAlaska Uranium Mine near Saskatchewan, Canada](#)

The man's body has been recovered and sent to Prince Albert for an autopsy. His name will not be released by RCMP until they have notified next of kin in B.C. and Alberta.

Crews were working on a planned \$3.58 million 18-hole winter drilling program. However, operations have been suspended at this site until further notice, said Peter Dasler, President and CEO of CanAlaska.

The investigation is being conducted by RCMP, Occupational Health and Safety and the Coroner's Office.

Thursday 24 February 2011

QLD: Mine industry making 'progress' to cut fatigue-related deaths

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

The Queensland Resources Council (QRC) says it is developing a fatigue standard to help prevent road deaths of mine workers.

Coroner Annette Hennessy yesterday handed down 24 recommendations after an inquest into

two separate road crashes in the Bowen Basin in central Queensland.

QRC chief executive Michael Roche says all recommendations will be carefully considered.

He says work has already started on one of the recommendations.

"We're working on a guidance note on fatigue with the regulator, the Queensland Mines Inspectorate, and with the major mining unions," he said.

"I think with the handing down of the coroner's recommendations, that will give a fillip to finalising that work and getting a guidance note out.

"The industry has not been sitting around waiting for the coroner's findings and a lot of progress has been made by individual mine sites, particularly in areas like providing buses to transport workers to and from mine sites."

However, Chris Gilbert from the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) says mining companies can do more to address fatigue issues.



The CFMEU says mining companies can do more to address fatigue issues. (7pm TV News QLD)

"One of the recommendations was a competency-based training assessment of fatigue," he said.

"They can look at bussing workers in and out today or having accommodation at the mine site available after the conclusion of their shifts."

Mr Gilbert says many workers travel long distances after their shifts to see their families.

"A lot of them choose to live further away and they want to go home," he said.

"They want to end their compressed rosters and go home to be with their families - that's a personal choice."

USA: Guilty Plea Imminent for WV Coal Miner?

Extract from WDTV

A coal miner indicted on federal charges that he lied about his credentials has apparently agreed to plead guilty to unspecified charges.

49 year old Luke Pugh is accused of claiming to be certified to conduct safety inspections and work as a foreman when he signed off on examinations in record books.

He also allegedly lied to a federal Mine Safety and Health Administration inspector.

Pugh's 37 charges stem from 2007 when he worked at the Pleasant Hill Mine in Randolph County. He is expected to admit his guilt March 8th in Elkins federal court.

Industry Assistance Seminar

A series of seminars on the Mine Safety Advisory Council's risk management approaches to fatigue, musculoskeletal disorders and the impact of hazards on workers, will be held between March and July 2011 at Gunnedah, Wollongong, Rutherford and Mudgee. Further information at:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/minerals/safety/resources/raining-and-workshops/?a=375689>

Mining dictionary

A guide to coal mining terminology

A

Always Afloat

An "always safely afloat" clause is inserted in the charterparty for the purpose of preventing a vessel from being ordered to berth where it cannot load/discharge without touching the ground or discharging part of its cargo prior to berthing.

-Ed