



# Mining Accident News No.1212

19 to 30 May 2012

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Saturday 19 May 2012

## Five trapped in NW China copper mine

*Extract from Xinhua*

LANZHOU - Work is under way on Saturday to rescue five people trapped in a copper mine in Northwest China's Gansu province, according to the provincial work safety bureau.

Officials with the bureau said the five include two water-drainage workers who entered the mine - owned by Gansu Zhujin Mining Co. Ltd., in Xihe county, Longnan city - at around 11 am on Friday. They were followed several hours later by another three attempting a rescue.

The site has not been mined since 2009, when it closed, and the company authorities suspect the workers got into trouble when they were poisoned by gas.

That theory should be verified as an investigation has begun into the cause of the accident.

## China: Trapped Miner Found Alive after 17 Days

*Extract from IANS*

Beijing - In a miraculous escape, a miner has been found alive 17 days after being trapped underground following a coal mine flood in China's Heilongjiang province, Xinhua reported.

Rescuers said the man, who was reached at about 4 a.m. Saturday, is in a stable condition after receiving medical treatment at a local hospital.

A shaft of the coal mine, located in Hegang city, was flooded May 2 in the morning. There were as many as 28 miners working underground at

**NOTE:** Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual sender, and are not necessarily the views of the NSW Department of Trade and Investment, Regional Infrastructure and Services  
Issue 12 of 2012

that time. At least 10 escaped but as many have been confirmed dead.

Rescuers have since worked round the clock to drain the mine.

So far, the rescuers have managed to save five people and are still searching for the remaining three.

### This week in mining accident history (1)

**19 May 1928**

**Mather No.1 Mine**

**Mather, Pennsylvania, USA**

**Underground coal mine**

**195 killed by explosion**

MATHER, PA., May 21. -- With the faint hope that some life might still exist within the debris of the Mather mine of the Mather Colliers Company, hundreds of rescue workers sought today to learn the fate of at least 150 victims in one of the most disastrous explosions in the history of Pennsylvania soft coal mining.

Early today 63 of the more than 200 miners trapped in the pit when the explosion occurred Saturday were accounted for.

Fourteen men have been rescued alive and 49 disfigured bodies have been brought to the surface and placed in temporary morgues.

Walter H. Glasgow, state secretary of mines, who arrived Saturday night has settled on a total of 210 as the number of men originally trapped.

Glasgow held to the hope that some of the main group of miners in butt 4, where it was thought the gas exploded, might yet be found alive in their working places, more than 300 feet underground and thousands of feet from the shaft entrance.

"If the men have air they are still alive," John Ira Thomas, deputy mine secretary in charge of the bituminous section said.

But rescue workers were more dubious about the chances of life withing the subterranean

chambers than were the state mine officials.

Rescuers noting the manner in which the recovered bodies have been disfigured, saw little possibility that life should have survived in the pit nearer the explosion.

Officials of the mine refused to give up hope of finding any of those entombed alive, but the grime covered rescue workers have just one word for inquirers -- "gas." One theory of the explosion was that a pocket of gas had been struck by one of the working faces in the mine. Veterans of the pit, including O'Hara, who has worked in the Mather mine four years agreed with this theory and gave the opinion that is was a coal dust explosion.

They believed a wreck had piled up a motor and a string of mine cars stifing up a lot of coal dust, which had been ignited by a trolley wire. They cling to this theory even though the Mather mine, which was considered a model in modern methods of engineering efficiency, had been completely rock dusted, which is a method used in mines to avert explosions of coal dust.

Tuesday 22 May 2012

### China: Four dead, more trapped in collapsed mine

*Extract from UPI*

SHENYANG, China, -- The roof of a colliery collapsed in China's Liaoning province, leaving four miners dead and five more trapped, authorities said Monday.

Twelve miners were working when the incident occurred at 11 a.m. Sunday in the Qingshui No. 2 Colliery in Qingshuitai, Xinhua reported.

Three people had been lifted out as of 11 a.m. Monday and the rescue work is still under way, said a press release from the provincial coal mine safety supervisory bureau.

The coal mine belongs to Shenyang Coking Coal LLC, a subsidiary of the state-owned Shenyang Coal Trade Group Corp.

The cause of the incident was under investigation.

## Zimbabwe: About 60 mineworkers trapped

*Extract from [www.euronews.com](http://www.euronews.com)*

HARARE (Reuters) – About sixty miners were trapped at Zimbabwe's Mimosa mine following an accident on Monday evening, the president of the local miner workers union said.

"There are 85 people who were trapped at 5:30 pm yesterday but more than 20 have been rescued so far. A bearing which moves the conveyer collapsed and the conveyer belt caught fire," Shadreck Pelewelo, the president of the National Mine Workers Union of Zimbabwe, told Reuters by telephone on Tuesday.

The trapped men were in good condition and were receiving food, he added.

It was not clear how far underground the miners were, although the mine reaches depths of about 200 metres (620 feet), according to Implats' web site.

Mimosa is a 50-50 joint venture between Impala Platinum and Aquarius Platinum Ltd. Neither company was immediately available for comment.

Platinum mining in southern Africa, where most of the world's supplies of the precious metal lies, is a dangerous business.

In neighbouring South Africa, a government safety drive has hit output in the sector as a surge of inspections has led to operational stoppages.

## Seven Trapped in SW China Mine Accident

*Extract from Xinhua*

Seven people remain trapped underground following a coal mine accident in southwest China's Yunnan province, local authorities said Tuesday.

A total of 10 people, including the coal mine's manager, a safety inspector and eight workers, became trapped after a coal mine shaft caved in Monday afternoon at a coal mine in Luxi County, a government spokesman said.

Three people were rescued as of 9 a.m. Tuesday, the spokesman said.

The 10 people were inspecting the mine's ventilation facilities when the accident occurred, he said.

The mine is owned by Yunnan Dongyuan Luxi Coal Mine Industry Co., Ltd., he said.

Rescuers are struggling to reach the trapped people, he said.

## S.Africa: Nineteen miners trapped in diamond mine

*Extract from SAPA*

Nineteen illegal miners were trapped underground in a diamond mine near Kleinsee in the Northern Cape on Tuesday, police said.

"Rescue workers are talking to the trapped miners, but we are not sure of their condition," Captain Cherelle Ehlers said.

A disused tunnel in the mine collapsed, trapping the men who were digging illegally for diamonds. Eleven managed to escape and alerted police that there were people underground.

"The miners are trapped in tunnels at the Bontekou mine in Kleinsee," said Ehlers. The mine closed the tunnels in April.

Police and rescue teams from Kommagas, Kleinsee, Port Nolloth, Upington, and Kimberley, as well as rescuers from the De Beers mine and the Nama Khoi disaster management were at the scene.

It is thought the tunnel collapsed at about 3am on Tuesday. The area that caved in was about six metres deep and led to several tunnels and an underground waiting area.

Three of the 11 who escaped were admitted to a hospital in Springbok.

Ehlers said loose gravel was hindering rescue efforts.

## W.Va. coal miner sues Alpha over wrongful firing

*Extract from Associated Press*

BECKLEY, W.Va. — A coal miner who says he was fired for enforcing safety standards that slowed down both production and the sealing of the Upper Big Branch mine in southern West Virginia is suing Alpha Natural Resources.

The State Journal says Glen Farley accuses Virginia-based Alpha and its Performance Coal Co. subsidiary of wrongfully terminating his \$79,000-a-year job last month.

Performance has until June 10 to file a response in Raleigh County Circuit Court.

Alpha spokesman Ted Pile couldn't comment on the merits of the case Tuesday but said Alpha "has a "no reprisals" policy when it comes to the identification of unsafe conditions or behaviors.

"In fact, our Running Right culture actually encourages employees to take action to avoid an accident or injury," he said, "and that's even if it means stopping production until the situation is corrected."

Farley, of Clear Fork, says he held many jobs at Performance and other former Massey Energy subsidiaries for 11 years.

Alpha bought Massey last summer. Farley accuses Alpha of following Massey's old habits, punishing workers who identify safety hazards and slow down production.

"The same persons who operated the Massey Energy subsidiaries, specifically Performance Coal Company, are still operating those subsidiaries," the lawsuit contends, "and old habits die slowly, if at all."

The lawsuit says Performance ostensibly fired Farley because he borrowed a tractor for personal use. Farley says he had permission.

Farley also maintains he was fired despite an outstanding evaluation of his performance.

The lawsuit says a decision he made in March cost Performance "substantial money" because it forced the relocation of a natural gas line. Farley says he shut down a job at a Workman's Creek mine because he discovered that a road crew had uncovered the line.

On April 1, he shut down a washed-out road that led to an Upper Big Branch Mine portal because he considered it unsafe for vehicles with rubber tires.

That decision slowed down the sealing of the mine where 29 men died in an April 2010 explosion.

The action also created more work for management because it required modification of a federal order closing the mine, the lawsuit said.

### Quote of the week



"Never attribute malice what can be adequately explained by stupidity."

Unknown

Wednesday 23 May 2012

## Tanzania: Need to Save Workers from Avoidable Accidents

*Extract from allafrika.com*

THE International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that 2.3 million workers, men and

women, die every year worldwide from work related accidents and diseases.

The ILO notes that the statistics are under estimate because of inadequate reporting of accidents and diseases related to work.

During a three day sub-regional workshop on improving safety and health that was held recently, the Labour Commissioner in the Ministry of Labour and Employment, Mr Saul Kinemela, said Tanzania does not have data related to the number of people dying from work related to accidents and diseases. He said the country does not have a proper system of keeping records of deaths resulting from work related accidents and diseases.

The Minister for Labour and Employment noted that Safety and Health in the mining sector remains a challenge to the government and specially the mining sector despite its benefits. Tanzania is the fourth largest gold producer in Africa, after South Africa, Ghana and Mali. Gold production currently stands at roughly 40 tonnes a year, copper at 2,980 tonnes, silver at 10 tonnes and diamond at 112,670 carats.

The mining sector contributes 2.8 per cent to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) each year, while the Tanzania Chamber of Minerals and Energy and the Business Monitor International (IBM) forecast that the sector will grow by 7.7 per cent between 2011 and 2015. Minister Kabaka noted that the government together with ILO is striving to improve safety conditions, not only in the mining sector but at work places in general. "We have a long standing collaboration with the ILO on issues related to safety and health and I hope that we will continue to improve the situation," Ms Kabaka noted.

The minister's speech which was read on her behalf by the Labour Commissioner Saul Kinemela said that small scale miners continue to be a challenge, noting that their working conditions are a source of serious concern to the government. Previous incidents in the mining sector have on various occasions raised

concern over the issue of safety, especially in small scale mining activities. Memories are still fresh in the minds of many concerning 70 miners who perished after rains flooded a shaft at the Mererani Tanzanite mines in Simanjaru District, Manyara Region four years ago.

In 2011 three people, who allegedly sneaked into a mining shaft operated by TanzaniteOne Mining Company suffocated to death and in 2010 March, the deaths of three miners was attributed to collapsed pits. In 2002, some 48 miners had suffocated to death when a compressor used to pump in clean air failed to work. These are just a few of deaths caused by mining accidents in the country. To a large extent, small-scale mining is unregulated in the country; making the country's small-scale mines the most dangerous in Africa.

The Minister for Labour and Employment stresses that small-scale miners continue to be a challenge in the country, noting that considerable areas of Tanzanite and Gold are mined by the artisan miners. "Small scale miners working conditions have often been a source of serious concern to the government and we hope to find lasting solutions," she explained. In the small scale mining areas, the way the pits are dug and the absence of rescue and other emergency services make it virtually impossible to carry out rescue and recovery operations in the event of an accident.

Minister Kabaka says it is only through collaborative efforts between the government, employers and workers organizations, that safety and health can be improved. "This will in turn build a strong mining industry that will ensure the country, communities and small scale miners enjoy the benefits from the industry," she noted. Since its foundation, the ILO has been concerned with safety and health at work.

Many of its early conventions dealt with specific hazards and indeed were similar to the existing health and safety law in that they prohibited certain processes. Starting the late 60s and 70s

many countries began revising and updating health and safety laws. A key element was introduced for the first time in the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Convention C155, calling upon the government to formulate, implement and review a national policy in the areas of OSH.

Governments that ratify the convention, are required to consult with the representative organization of employers and workers, formulate and implement and periodically review the national policy.

The ILO Director General, Mr Juan Somavia, said safety and health of workers is about respect to human life, which is essential to the dignity of work and is at the core of the ILO's Decent Work Agenda. He said over the last few years the mining industry has experienced an unprecedented boom, fuelled by worldwide need for metals and minerals resulting to a dramatic increase of prices of commodities.

"Mining companies have actively sought new opportunities to satisfy demand and have started investing heavily in many African countries," he noted. He said estimates also point to a sharp increase in the numbers of small-scale artisanal miners in many African countries. "Once more mining has become the fulcrum for many countries economies and developmental prospects as well as development.

The ILO Director General's speech which was read on his behalf by Mr Alexio Musind, ILO Director for (Kenya, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania) said while miners represent just one per cent of the global number of workers, they still suffer 8 per cent of the world's occupational fatalities. Mr Somavia said the scale of tragedies often goes unnoticed, however, when they hit the headlines, mining accidents and fatalities are often in the spotlight.

He said as tripartite organization, the ILO is committed to promoting approaches forged through tripartite consensus, those of the workers, employers and the government.

"This is one of the areas where we all agree, no one benefits from casualties in the workplace. It makes political, social and economic sense.

All stakeholders have a contribution to make to translate this consensus into concrete preventative measures," he explained. He said governments need to put in place necessary policies and legal framework and ensure that it is respected by all parties.

Companies, he said, need to apply their managerial and technical expertise to implement that framework in each workplace, in dialogue with their workers. "Workers need to contribute through active participation in risk control by following procedures and engaging in a dialogue with management on what works and what does not work," he explained.

### Zimbabwe: 178 Miners in Narrow Escape

*Extract from [allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com)*

AT least 178 workers narrowly escaped death at Mimosa Platinum Mine in Zvishavane after being trapped 100 metres underground for nearly 24 hours after a fire broke out in a shaft.

The workers' ordeal started when a conveyer belt collapsed and caught fire at around 5pm on Monday and ended around 2pm yesterday when the last trapped worker was rescued.

No one was injured in the accident but the rescued workers looked distraught when they emerged from the mining shaft in small groups.

The workers used safe breathing apparatus while underground and had to be attended to on the spot by a resident doctor after being rescued before they were released to go home.

The workers were cut off after smoke contaminated the air above them, virtually closing their way out.

Mimosa officials had to ask for help from Unki and Zimasco Mines to evacuate the workers.

Mimosa Mining Company (Pvt) Limited confirmed the outbreak of the fire that damaged conveyor belt structures.

"This was happened when the conveyor belt in the main decline ignited," officials said in a statement.

Mimosa wishes to advise that all employees have now been safely evacuated from the mine. No injuries have been reported."



Underground mining in Zimbabwe. Photo by [Zimplats](#)

The Mimosa officials said they were yet to ascertain the extent of the damage and its impact on production.

Labour and Social Services Minister Paurina Mpariwa said Government has since started investigating the accident.

"Our officers are on the ground to investigate whether it is negligence on the part of the company or it's a genuine accident," she said.

Minister Mpariwa said despite the incident, mining accidents have been on the decline in the last few months, a sign that companies were adhering to safety measures.

Rescue teams could be seen running around at the mine yesterday afternoon while ambulances were taking some of the workers who had just been rescued to the mine clinic.

The mine's resident director, Mr Peter Chimboza, said the fire started on Monday evening.

"There were no incidents during the rescue operation," he said.

"All the employees who were trapped underground owing to low visibility which had

been caused by smoke were checked by our doctor and were discharged.

"We have a mine rescue team association, so when we had the emergency with many employees underground, we had to call Unki Mine and Zimasco rescue teams from Shurugwi to come and assist us in evacuating the trapped employees."

Mr Chimboza said the mine has temporarily halted operations at the affected section while assessing the damage.

One of the employees interviewed after being discharged from the mine clinic said he had a difficult experience underground.

"I am feeling very well but I had a difficult time because there were no ablution facilities where we were trapped," he said.

"We were being choked by the smoke, but we were communicating with each other underground. I do not remember anyone who suffered immediate complications."

A medical doctor who spoke on condition of anonymity said the smoke from the fire could result in long term effects to the employees.

"The smoke which they were inhaling could have mixed with some gases that are found underground," he said.

Mimosa Mine is jointly owned by the Mauritius-registered Aquarius and South Africa's Impala Platinum known as Implats.

Zimbabwe is the second largest producer of platinum after South Africa.

### Two trapped in Chile coal mine

*Extract from [www.skynews.com.au](http://www.skynews.com.au)*

Two men have been trapped 140 metres underground after a cave-in at a coal mine in central Chile.

The secretary of mining in the Biobio region, Luis Ulloa, said while the accident took place on Tuesday, the owners of the Buen Retiro mine

did not report the emergency until nearly eight hours later, a delay he described as 'very grave.'

'I regret the time that passed between the occurrence of the cave-in some 140 meters underground and the moment of the notice, which caused the loss of valuable time,' Ulloa told Radio Bio Bio.

The mine owners may be subject to 'the most serious sanctions,' depending on the outcome of the official accident investigation.

The trapped miners, identified as Richard Perez Jara, 21, and Reinaldo Brevis, 39, are reported to be fine and in contact with people outside the mine, authorities said.

## Five Alpha foremen cited following W. Va. mine death

*Extract from Charleston Gazette, USA*

Five foremen at an Alpha Natural Resources mine in Fayette County ignored dozens of safety violations, including the kind of poor mine wall stability that led to the death of a worker in March, state inspectors allege.

State inspectors cited mine foremen Roger Cantley and Steve Lafferty, assistant mine foremen James Law and Chris Patrick and foreman Donnie Hayhurst, according to state records.

State inspectors said that mine condition reports from the foremen at Kingston No. 2 did not reflect the actual conditions underground. Under state and federal law, foremen are required to conduct detailed mine inspections, note any problems they find and ensure that those problems are fixed before workers go underground.

In one instance at Kingston, mine reports said underground conditions were "safe," and there was "no mention of any unsafe" mine walls or ribs. State inspectors, though, found more than 30 different locations where unsafe mine rib conditions existed.

Alpha's Kingston Resources was cited Monday with 45 safety violations in the investigation of the March 10 mine wall collapse that killed 34-year-old section foreman Jeremy Sigler of Pool at the Kingston No. 2 Mine near Mossy.

The state citations included one that the state classified as deserving a "special assessment" -- a fine of \$10,000 -- for not controlling the mine wall, or rib, in the area where Sigler was killed.

Leslie Fitzwater, spokeswoman for the state mine safety office, said monetary penalties for the individual citations have not yet been proposed by her agency. The state's documents did not list the age, hometown or contact information for the five foremen.

Both of the coal-mining deaths in West Virginia so far in 2012 occurred at Alpha operations. Last week, Clyde Dolin, 57, was killed at Alpha subsidiary Independence Coal's Liberty Processing plant in Boone County.

Independence Coal was among the operations that Alpha inherited when it purchased Massey Energy in June 2011, while Kingston was already an Alpha subsidiary.

Alpha officials have promoted their company safety program, "Running Right," as the solution to improving health-and-safety performance, especially at the former Massey operations it purchased nearly a year ago.

Ted Pile, an Alpha spokesman, said that management at his company's Kingston subsidiary have not yet seen the state's report.

"So we haven't had any time to assess the report and its conclusions," Pile said. "In any event it's highly unlikely that we'd talk about any actions we might or might not take involving individual employees. We just don't discuss personnel matters in the public arena."



### Mechanical Engineering Safety Seminar

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Mechanical Engineering Safety Seminar will be held at Sydney Olympic Park, on Wednesday 8 August and Thursday 9 August 2012.

Information and registration form available at:

[www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/resources/seminars-and-conferences](http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/resources/seminars-and-conferences)



## USA: Miner's leg amputated after accident

*Extract from Princeton Daily Clarion, USA*

PIKE COUNTY — A Five Star Mine worker's leg was amputated after he was pinned underground Tuesday afternoon, reported WFIE television.

The miner's name wasn't released, but he's believed to be a Princeton resident, according to reports from his friends.

The television station reported he became pinned underground between a coal hauler and a large piece of equipment that continuously drills coal.

Mine Safety and Health Administration officials say his left leg was amputated above the knee and he is in critical condition.

Investigators were at the mine site.

It's the second accident at the mine this spring. In a March accident, two miners were injured. Names in both accidents are not being released.

## Death Toll in China Mine Collapse Mounts To Nine

*Extract from RTT News*

With the recovery of five more bodies on Wednesday, the death toll in Sunday's mine collapse in China's Liaoning province rose to nine, Chinese media reported quoting officials.

Twelve miners were working in a newly-dug shaft in the Qingshui No.2 Mine, located in the provincial capital of Shenyang, when the shaft's roof collapsed. Four miners died at the scene while three were pulled out live, the reports said.

The mine belongs to Shenyang Coking Coal Limited Liability Company (SCC), a subsidiary of the state-owned Shenyang Coal Trade Group Corporation.

## Second roof fall at Dendrobium mine

*Extract from ABC News Online, Aus*

Miners at an Illawarra underground coal mine escaped injury recently when a section of roof collapsed.

The collapse happened on the main road inside BHP Billiton Illawarra Coal's Dendrobium mine near Mt Kembla, about a month ago.

The New South Wales Trade and Investment Department has confirmed that an eight metre thick section of roof fell at an intersection.

A department spokeswoman says no one was trapped or injured, but workers further into the mine were forced to use alternative exits.

She says an investigation since then has resulted in changes to the way the roof is supported and monitored and the way intersections are formed.

It's the second roof fall to happen on an access road at Dendrobium in recent years.

In November 2010 a section of roof five metres thick collapsed.

The company has told the ABC findings from an investigation into a minor roof fall at Dendrobium Mine in early April are now being considered by Illawarra Coal.

The company says nobody was injured as a result of the incident and there was no disruption to production.

## Two illegal miners killed in S.Africa, 16 still trapped

*Extract from Vanguard Media*

JOHANNESBURG – South African authorities said Wednesday they had recovered two bodies of illegal diamond miners from a disused mine tunnel and up to 16 were still trapped underground.

“They’ve taken one body out, and they’ve seen the other body with the cameras,” De Beers spokesman Abel Madonsela.

The accident happened at a mine in Kleinzee, one of the small mining towns in the arid region of Namaqualand, in the Northern Cape province, known for its natural flower splendour.

According to a radio 702 report, three bodies were recovered from the mine.

“The problem is it’s very dangerous. The gravel is so loose, the holes are caving in,” police spokeswoman Chelle Ehlers told AFP.

“At this stage we think 16 are trapped underground,”

Mining is the lifeblood of the Northern Cape, the country’s most sparsely-populated province.

De Beers stopped operations in Namaqualand around three years ago pending the mines’ sale to fellow miner Trans Hex, which signed a 225-million-rand (\$27-million, 21-million-euro) acquisition deal last year.

The mining giant closed down access to the mines in April when it discovered illegal miners from the area had started work in the tunnels.

Accidents involving illegal miners are common in South Africa, where impoverished diggers often take great risks to carve out tunnels or work in disused shafts at diamond and gold mines.

Thursday 24 May 2012

## **Zimbabwe: Mimosa's Expert Handling of Emergency Laudable**

*Extract from [allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com), EDITORIAL*

The rescue of 178 miners trapped when fire broke out at Mimosa Platinum Mine on Tuesday shows how things can go right in Zimbabwe when people think and act sensibly. Mining is inherently dangerous. Men are working underground where carve-ins, sudden pockets of water or gas, or, as in this case, fires in machinery are an ever-lurking set of perils. No

one can predict when an accident might happen, nor what form it will take.

But mines can prepare for the worst. We saw these preparations at Mimosa.

There were refuge bays on the levels where the miners were trapped. Breathing apparatus was stored underground, so the miners could survive the smoke.

Effective communications were still in place, whether these were standard or back-up.

The three large Zvishavane mines had already made advance arrangements to pool their rescue teams should a serious problem hit one of them, which no doubt means production would be lost at all three but not lives.

No doubt the teams, or at the very least the team leaders, had trained together and thought about exactly how they would cope with different types of disaster.

So when Mimosa pressed the emergency button the other two mines responded promptly.

Most important it is clear that Mimosa management had trained and prepared for emergencies. Both above ground and below ground team leaders and senior managers knew what to do, were able to make rapid assessments of the emergency, quickly decide on the correct course of action and then get working.

Seventeen hours after the fire was noticed the last man was brought to the surface.

There was no panic, no expectation that anyone could muddle through. All that we saw was calm competence and a determination that the only possible outcome was the rescue of the trapped miners without loss of life and preferably without injury. That was achieved.

We have no doubt that for the trapped miners it was an ordeal they would rather have missed. Being trapped underground while fires rage overhead and smoke fills tunnels must be among every miner's worst nightmares. But they

followed their training, they followed orders, and no doubt yesterday were having a good rest.

The mine owners and the Mines Ministry will be investigating the cause of the fire. It might be human error; it might be, as the ministry noted, "a genuine accident".

In one sense it is important to find out, largely to prevent such a fire happening again. Many mining rules are in fact drawn up as a result of such investigations.

But in another sense the actual cause is less important than the fact that the mine was ready to cope. No matter how skilled men are, and no matter how good supervision and management is, mistakes will be made. All training can do is minimise, not eliminate, these.

No machinery is so perfect that it cannot develop faults very rapidly, even if it is well maintained. A lot of engineering skill goes into minimising such faults, but again they cannot be eliminated.

So in the end a mine has to be ready to face disaster. Training, preparations, skill and thought all play a part.

So, today Mimosa can breathe a deep sigh of relief. What so easily could have been a tragedy, with dozens of bodies being winched to the surface, was instead a demonstration of what can be done if everyone is ready and prepared.

Zimbabwe can be proud that it does have the skilled thinking men, miners and managers, who were ready and who made a complex set of correct decisions.

And we note that just about everyone involved was a Zimbabwean.

We hope that all mines and all industries are taking similar precautions and are ready for the worst.

For what Mimosa shows is that, if you are ready, the worst can be survived.

Regardless of the cause of the fire, all at the mine should be saluted for the way they reacted.

## De Beers Reports Second Deceased Digger Removed from Collapsed Tunnel at Bontekoe

*Extract from MineWeb.com*

**Kleinsee, Namaqualand:** The rescue operation at Bontekoe continued through the night yesterday following the arrival of an additional and specialist Mine Rescue Services Proto-Team which flew in from Welkom. The mine rescue teams are attempting to locate and rescue an estimated 15 people who remain trapped when the tunnels they had excavated collapsed on Tuesday morning. The illegal diggings are in the Bontekoe area on the northern boundary of Namaqualand Mines and State owned land.

Overnight the body of a second person was removed from one of the tunnels. This brings the number to two of deceased diggers recovered. One trapped digger was rescued on Tuesday.

During the course of Wednesday the rescue teams continued excavating where the diggers tunnels had collapsed and began excavating a new trench in an attempt to open up another access point to the illegal digger's tunnels.

Excavating in the underground tunnels is perilous. The rescue team has deployed a Trapped Persons Location Device in the digger's access shaft and on the surface. The accident site has been cleared so as to more effectively deploy this sensitive rescue sensor to find any survivors. Three diggers who escaped on Tuesday from the tunnels have met with the Company and rescue team leadership in an attempt to reconstruct where the tunnels were situated and where trapped diggers might be. The Company leadership is continuing to engage with the community.

The rescuers will continue to excavate the digger's access shaft however in addition to digging the new trench the team also hopes to use the information from the sensors to inform their additional excavation planning and activity.

The CEO of De Beers Consolidated Mines Phillip Barton joined Barend Petersen, Chairman of DBCM, in expressing their condolences to the families of the deceased diggers and in thanking the rescue teams and their support services for their tireless efforts which continue unabated.

The rescue is being undertaken by a team of mining, safety and other technical experts from De Beers, the Mine Rescue Services Proto-Team from Welkom, the South African Police Services Disaster Recovery Unit, the Black Mountain Mine Rescue Brigade Proto-Team, the Department of Mineral Resources, Emergency Services from the Department of Health and the local government authorities who have worked together in often dangerous conditions managing this tragedy.

### USA: Aggregate Miner Dies in Oklahoma

A miner has died at a sand and gravel operation in Oklahoma.

According to MSHA, the fatality occurred Wednesday at the Broken Bow Sand & Gravel Mine. The operation is located near Eagleton in the southern corner of the state. An excavator reportedly overturned into a pond at the site, killing the operator.

According to MSHA's database, the operator is Meridian Aggregates Co., a Limited Partnership. The controller is Martin Marietta Materials, Inc., based in Raleigh, NC.

### Tas: Unions watch safety at Mt Lyell copper mine

*Extract from ABC News Online, Aus*

Union delegates want certainty for the safety of workers at the Mount Lyell Copper mine on Tasmania's west-coast after a rock fall last week.

Underground operations have been temporarily suspended while a workplace standards investigation continues.

Robert Flanagan from the Australian Workers Union says safety is paramount for the 140 underground mining workers.

"A rock fall is a serious event and we need to be certain that when employees return to their normal work that they're not being exposed to a hazard that can compromise their safety," he said.

The mine's General Manager Scot Clyde says the mine was complying with workplace standards before the incident.

He says workers were evacuated from the drill site before the rockfall after safety officers noticed movement during routine inspections.

Underground workers have been assigned to other duties.

### USA: Princeton man 'amazing' following mine accident that severed leg

*Extract from www.tristate-media.com, USA*

PRINCETON—A Princeton man whose left leg was amputated at the knee following a Tuesday mining accident is "doing great and amazing," according to his fiancée.

Kevin Truxal, 34, became pinned between a machine that grinds the coal seam and a hauling vehicle Tuesday at the Five Star Mine near Petersburg. He is recuperating at the University of Louisville Hospital, said his bride-to-be, Elke Wright.

"He is actually up and walking on the walker," she said. "He's doing great and he's amazing me — he's not depressed, like most people think he would be."

Wright reports that Truxal may need additional surgery, but if not, he's expected home next week. Regardless, the coming days will find Truxal being fitted for a prosthetic device and beginning rehabilitation exercises, she said.

"He's ready to start walking on his own, and even talking about getting ready to go back to work," Wright said.

The fiancée added that mine officials have called to check on his progress and to “just see if we need anything.”

A spokeswoman for Vectren Energy, which owns the mine operated by Five Star, said state mine-safety officials briefly shut down a portion of the mine where the accident occurred but it has since reopened.

“The investigation is continuing but everything is back up and running,” spokeswoman Chase Kelley said. “We obviously regret the accident, and want to do all we can to make sure something like this doesn’t happen again.”

Meanwhile, Wright said family and friends are grateful not only that Truxal survived — he had been listed in critical condition — but that he has shown such resolve.

“As long as he’s here and we’ve got him, I don’t care that his leg is gone,” she said.

## This week in mining accident history (2)

**24 May 1965**  
**CL Kline Coal Company**  
**No.2 Mine**  
**Robbins, Tennessee, USA**  
**Underground coal mine**  
**5 killed by methane explosion**

An explosion, originating in the face area of the left main aircourse, killed all five men in the mine. The explosion occurred when a methane accumulation was ignited by a cigarette lighter. The methane was emitted from crevices in the roof near the face.

The mine was classified non-gassy by the State. The owner-operator was the only one that possessed a flame safety lamp. He reportedly made a gas check during his pre-shift examination.

Ventilation was inadequate. The mine fan was not capable of supplying air flow appropriate to the size of the mine. Also the eight inby stoppings in the mains were constructed of

brattice cloth and the left main aircourse was advanced 300 feet in by the last open crosscut with a line curtain terminated 25 feet from the face.

Dust from coal on the conveyors and from spillage along the conveyor lines entered into the propagation.

Friday 25 May 2012

## USA: Former Massey Coal Mines Targeted in Massive Inspection Blitz

*Extract from NPR*

Dozens of federal mine safety inspectors descended into 43 coal mines in three Appalachian states Wednesday in a massive, one-day blitz targeting mines once owned by Massey Energy.

A spokeswoman for the Mine Safety and Health Administration confirmed the sweep Thursday but did not provide many details.

All the mines involved are in West Virginia, Virginia and Kentucky and are now owned by Alpha Natural Resources, which absorbed Massey Energy after a disastrous explosion killed 29 coal miners at Massey's Upper Big Branch mine in West Virginia in 2010.

The mines targeted for these surprise "impact" inspections represent 30 percent of all the coal mines Alpha now operates.

A source familiar with the inspections says they were focused on conveyor belts used to transport coal underground. The source is not authorized to discuss the inspections publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

A fire involving a conveyor belt in Massey's Aracoma Alma Mine in West Virginia in 2006 led to the deaths of two coal miners, corporate criminal charges against the company and more than \$4 million in civil and criminal fines.

MSHA spokeswoman Amy Louviere confirms that Wednesday's inspection blitz was prompted

by a recent incident involving a burning conveyor belt at Alpha's Road Fork No. 51 mine in Wyoming County, W. Va., which was also once owned by Massey.

That incident included smoke but no fire, according to NPR's source. MSHA decided to then quickly target the other former Massey mines for surprise inspections "because of the serious nature of the incident," according to Louviere.

According to MSHA records, Road Fork No. 51 was cited this week for a number of "serious and substantial" mine safety violations classified as "unwarrantable failures" considered "aggravated conduct constituting more than ordinary negligence." The citations involve fire safety procedures and equipment and regulations governing conveyor belts. But detailed descriptions of the violations are not included in MSHA records available to the public.

"We are still investigating at Road Fork, so it would be premature to speculate whether the circumstances are similar to what happened at Aracoma," Louviere says.

As for Wednesday's inspection blitz, Louviere adds that "no violations as serious as this one [at Road Fork No. 51] were found ... but the number and nature of citations and orders issued are still under review."

Alpha has made much of its "Running Right" safety program since its takeover of Massey last year. Thousands of former Massey employees have gone through Alpha safety training, and the company has pledged to improve on Massey's safety record, which was one of the worst in the industry. By some measures, the company's overall safety record has improved.

But late last year, Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., said on the floor of the U.S. House of Representatives that Alpha has displayed "some troubling contradictions that merit a careful watch."

Some former Massey executives responsible for managing and overseeing some of the

company's most troubled mines continue to work for Alpha.

Earlier this month, Alpha announced the creation of a mine safety and health foundation, which is part of a \$209 million settlement with the Justice Department stemming from the Upper Big Branch Mine disaster. The settlement kept the company from facing corporate criminal charges for the tragedy, which occurred before the Massey acquisition.

In the announcement, Alpha CEO Kevin Crutchfield said, "The safety of our employees is the highest value of our company, and mine safety and health is imperative to the success of our industry."

MSHA has staged a number of surprise "impact" inspections since the Upper Big Branch explosion, but none have focused on so many mines owned by a single company on a single day.

Update at 11:03 p.m. ET. Mine Owner's Comment:

Alpha spokesman Ted Pile has provided a company response:

"The situation at the Road Fork No. 51 Mine incident was not a life-threatening situation. When they detected smoke, our people immediately took the proper actions to assure the safety of all miners while the source was investigated. They did exactly what they were supposed to do proficiently and professionally. An incident like this, while troubling, is always investigated for root causes and for corrective actions that can be undertaken to prevent them from reoccurring in any of the mines in our system."

Pile also confirmed the inspection blitz Wednesday and adds:

"We were subject to more than 4,600 inspector days in the first quarter, so inspection activity is always high and that's probably the case for most underground coal mines."

Update at 10:55 p.m. ET. 'Slipping Conveyor Belt' Caused Evacuation:

Alpha filed a document with the Securities and Exchange Commission on Thursday that provides more details about the conveyor belt incident that triggered Wednesday's blast inspections.

The incident at Road Fork No. 51 Mine on May 18 involved smoke generated by "a slipping conveyor belt." MSHA considered the situation so threatening that it issued what is known as an "imminent danger" order, forcing evacuation of that section of the mine. Alpha's SEC filing says no fire was discovered and no injuries resulted.

Saturday 26 May 2012

## S. Africa: Diggers trapped in mine dead, say police

*Extract from [www.iol.co.za](http://www.iol.co.za)*

Rescue teams have so far retrieved five of the 17 bodies still underground at Kleinzee's Bontekou mine in Namaqualand in the Northern Cape, and have closed the mine to the public.

Sandslides reportedly trapped the group on Tuesday at 3am.



The loose soil, and the manner in which the bodies are trapped underground, means it takes rescue team up to several hours to retrieve just a single body. Photo: Neil Baynes

While 11 members of an initial group of 30 miners emerged from the same scene alive, 19 miners, known as "diggers" are believed to have

died in the intense heat while trapped inside the mine.

Two bodies were retrieved on Wednesday.

Northern Cape police spokeswoman Chanelle Ehlers said recovery teams found the miners' tunnel at 3.30am on Friday. Teams had started recovering bodies from the tunnel, and there was no communication from the trapped miners. It was believed they had died, Ehlers said.

Clothing and food wrappers were found in the tunnel, she added.

The mine was closed at about 4am on Friday, with police officers manning an entrance hut about 1km from the mine, from where they ordered people away.

On Thursday, just before the last rays of the sun turned the clouds pink above the mine, front-end loaders deposited heaps of sand into two large holes where the illegal diamond diggers had entered, crushing all hopes of finding survivors alive.

A handful of victims' relatives remained after the sun had set – some of them family members of 38-year-old Aubrey Booysen.

Booyesen's father, Daniel, sat on a dune looking down at the mine below. Next to him, Booysen's cousin Erroll sat behind Booysen's sister Maurida, at times folding his arms protectively around her as cold of the night started setting in.

They're from the small coastal town of Hondeklipbaai, about 60km south of Kleinzee, where the disaster occurred.

"I don't think he can be alive anymore. One doesn't die in your own way, one dies in God's way. It was his time to go," the victim's father said.

On Wednesday the group of relatives was about 50 strong, but by Thursday it became clear no one would get out alive and the crowd thinned to only about 10. They were outnumbered by about 30 police officers, who came from Upington, Springbok, Garies and Nababeep.

De Beers site manager Lester van Rooyen and other key search operation personnel walked down to the scene of the accident, where Van Rooyen explained how operations would proceed.

On a strip of solid ground on the opposite side of the dunes from where the media and relatives were watching, staff arrived in a Northern Cape Department of Health forensic pathology van.

They parked near a refreshment tent, where sandwiches and cool drinks were offered. Three temporary toilets stood near a temporary SAPS client service centre, a caravan from the Soebatsfontein police. A Northern Cape ANC van was the only obvious political presence.

Over the past few months, Xhosa- and Afrikaans-speaking diamond diggers from northern west coast communities such as Kleinsee, Kommagas, Hondeklipbaai and as far south as Koekenaap have been spending days and nights removing diamonds from the Bontekou mine, about 100km from the nearest big town, Springbok.

But the accident stopped all that.

Speaking at the accident scene, Port Nolloth cluster police spokesman Warrant Officer Paul Pieters, said: "The diggers often come here since the mine has closed. Security was minimal and everything was scaled down. The grounds were unguarded.

"Every now and again, De Beers came and threw soil on the mine to close it again, but soon enough, the diggers came back and opened up the mine again."

While more bodies were being retrieved one by one, Booyesen, who worked previously in the fishing and legal mining industry, prepared to return to his hut on a farm near Hondeklipbaai.

It's situated a few kilometres from his missing son's government-subsidised home in Hondeklipbaai which he shared with his young son before his fateful trip to the mine on Tuesday.

Daniel Booyesen said his daughter would probably take over full-time care of his grandson now.

And he'd make it his job to persuade the child that "digging" should never be an option for him.

Looking down at the mine, he said: "It's terrible to be smothered below rocks and with so much soil on top of them."

Sunday 27 May 2012

### Collahuasi copper mine resumes after worker death

*Extract from Reuters*

The world's No. 3 copper mine, Chile's Collahuasi, is gradually resuming mining operations following the accidental death of a worker late Saturday, spokeswoman Bernardita Fernandez told Reuters on Sunday.

Julio Patricio Pinones, 37, was killed at the mine while working with drilling equipment, Collahuasi's union said on its website. Pinones is the third worker to die in an accident at Collahuasi this year.

Collahuasi "voluntarily halted operations in all its areas after the worker death ... and has been gradually restarting operations on Sunday," Fernandez said. "The specific area where the accident happened will be halted until an investigation into (the death) is complete," she added.

Collahuasi did not say what impact the temporary stoppage could have on output.

The mine was beset by work stoppages, bad weather and accidents last year, triggering a 10 percent tumble in output to about 453,000 tonnes of copper - its lowest production figure since 2007.



#### Electrical Engineering Safety Seminar - NEW VENUE

The 22<sup>nd</sup> Electrical Engineering Safety Seminar will be held at a new venue this year, **Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour**, on Wednesday 7 November and Thursday 8 November 2012. An agenda and information on accommodation options will be available when registrations open prior to the event.

[www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/resources/seminars-and-conferences](http://www.resources.nsw.gov.au/safety/resources/seminars-and-conferences)



Tuesday 29 May 2012

## Mining-linked accident: 3 labourers injured

*Extract from IBNLive.com*

Jaipur, India - At least three labourers were injured in a mining-related accident near Harmara area in the district today, police said. A portion of a stone quarry fell on workers who were extracting stones in the mine, they said. At least, three labourers were injured and hospitalised, police said. A JCB machine driver is trapped under the stones and efforts are on to rescue him.

## Department of Labor Releases Investigation Report on Ohio County Coal Mine Fatalities

*Extract from surfky.com*

OHIO COUNTY, KY – The U.S. Dept. of Labor has officially released the investigation report of a double fatality report that occurred in Ohio County's Equality Mine in 2011, owned by Armstrong Coal Company.

Accident investigators William Barnwell, Ray Cartwright, and James Pfeifer with the Mine Safety and Health Administration conducted an investigation of the incident that led to the deaths of 47-year-old Darrel Winstead of Madisonville, KY and 23-year-old Samuel Joe Lindsey, of Morton's Gap, KY.

The incident itself occurred on Friday, October 28, 2011 in the early morning hours. Winstead and Lindsey passed away when the vehicle they were operating was struck by falling debris.

The following is the actual overview report issued by the Department of Labor;

"On Friday, October 28, 2011, at approximately 6:15 a.m., 47-year old Darrel Alan Winstead, Certified Blaster, and 23-year old Samuel Joe Lindsey, Blaster Helper, were killed when the 1-ton truck they were in was struck and covered by rock and rubble when a portion of the highwall failed. Both miners were employees of

Mine Equipment and Mill Supply Company (MEMSCO), a contractor blasting company for Armstrong Coal Company, Inc. The two miners were in the #11 Pit traveling to the area of the pit that had been prepared for the loading of explosives and the eventual blasting of material as part of normal mining activity when the highwall failure occurred. The accident occurred because mine management failed to recognize a geologic anomaly, located in the portion of the highwall below the #14 coal seam and above the #13 coal seam, prior to the highwall failure."

On October 28, 29, and 30, 2011, Barnwell, Smith, Cartwright, Davis, Cook, and Jim Pfeifer and Megan Witkowski from MSHA Technical Support, along with Greg Goins, Kenny Mitchell, Bill Millay, Chris Ashby and Ronnie Drake, KOMSL Accident Investigators, traveled to the accident scene to take measurements and photographs. Interviews were held at the MSHA Beaver Dam Field Office on Saturday, October 29, 2011. Seven mine management officials, six miners and two contractor employees were interviewed.

As a conclusion to the investigation, according to investigators, the fatality occurred because of a geologic anomaly, located in the portion of the highwall below the #14 coal seam and above the #13 coal seam. The area of the pit where this shows itself also had two intersecting (or nearly intersecting) discontinuities that slid into the pit. The absence of a substantial bench to prevent the massive failure from entering the active pit where miners were working contributed to the death of two miners. The failure by mine management and the mine examiners to examine the site adequately and to recognize the anomaly and its potential failure and the lack of recognition of hazards by the miners was also contributing factors. The corrective action implemented was the operator revised the mine Ground Control Plan. All miners were trained in the changes. Five citations were issued to the mine.

Information provided by the US Department of Labor, Mine Safety and Health Administration

## Sask mining company Agrium fined after deadly accident

*Extract from [www.newstalk650.com](http://www.newstalk650.com)*

### Report on death of man killed in 2010 says work site did not meet safety standards

Saskatchewan mining company Agrium is shelling out \$420 thousand in fines after a deadly work place accident.

Edward Artic, 59, was killed in 2010 while working as an electrician at the Vanscoy Potash mine at the time. He died when a load fell on him while it was being lifted in an unsafe fashion.

A new report calls his death preventable. It says work site conditions did not meet provincial standards.

The company has since made changes to prevent this type of accident from happening again.

Wednesday 30 May 2012

## Families of Pike River victims abandon body retrieval

*Extract from ABC News Online, Aus*

The grieving families of 29 men killed in a New Zealand mine explosion 18 months ago are abandoning a campaign to recover their loved ones' bodies.

The families had demanded the retrieval of bodies entombed in the Pike River Coal mine since November 2010, when a series of methane explosions ripped through the remote South Island colliery.

But the families' spokesman, Bernie Monk, whose 23-year-old son Michael died in the disaster, said on Wednesday they had reluctantly concluded that reaching the bodies

was not feasible and trying to do so was too risky.

"We don't want anyone to lose their life trying to get our men out and we don't want other families to go through the hardship and the pain that we've been through over the last 18 months," he told the TV3 station.

"So we've come to that assessment that life is far better than trying to push people into a dangerous situation."

Earlier this month, the families of the miners - 24 New Zealanders, two Australians, two Britons and a South African - vowed to block any future attempts to extract coal from the site unless the bodies were removed.

Mr Monk said they decided to drop the campaign after a meeting on Tuesday night with coal company Solid Energy, which is buying the Pike River mine.

He said experts commissioned by Solid Energy had outlined the hazards of entering the underground area where the men died and made it clear the bodies could not be retrieved safely.

Mining stopped at Pike River after the explosion and the Pike River Coal company went into receivership soon afterwards.

An inquiry into the accident is expected to be completed later this year.

## Mining dictionary

### A guide to coal mining terminology

#### B

**Bit** The hardened and strengthened device at the end of a drill rod that transmits the energy of breakage to the rock. The size of the bit determines the size of the hole. A bit may be either detachable from or integral with its supporting drill rod.

-Ed