



Mining Accident News No.1218

14 to 23 August 2012

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Tuesday 14 August 2012

China: Death toll from colliery accident rises to seven

Extract from www.chinadaily.com.cn

CHANGCHUN - The death toll from a coal mine accident in Northeast China's Jilin province has risen to seven, as three miners who were pulled out from the mine died after rescue efforts failed, authorities said Tuesday.

Four of the 17 miners who were trapped underground had been lifted out of the Jisheng Coal Mine in the city of Baishan as of 2 pm Monday, and were sent to a nearby hospital for treatment, sources with the rescue headquarters said.

Three of them died after rescue efforts in the hospital failed, and the fourth is in stable condition, according to the sources.

Thirteen miners remain trapped in the mine, and rescue work is under way. However, rescue efforts have been hampered, as the shaft was blocked due to collapse, sources said.

The accident, triggered by a coal and gas burst, happened at around 6 am on Monday, killing four and trapping 17 miners underground.

A total of 116 miners were working underground when the accident occurred, and 95 of them were lifted out of the mine safely.

The Jisheng Coal Mine, which originally belonged to Tonghua Mining Bureau, was sold to a private owner in 2003 after the mine declared bankruptcy in 1995. It resumed production in 2008 and is currently capable of churning out 210,000 tons of coal annually.

QLD: Mining work a risky business

Extract from Whitsundays Times, Qld, Aus

AT LEAST 168 workers at mines and quarries were in serious accidents or high-risk situations in June - the month a young man perished at a quarry near Moranbah.

The death of Sean Scovell, 21, at Moranbah South Quarry, underscored how a dot-point list of injuries and near-misses could so easily deliver a tragedy.

Mr Scovell's death is classed as a "mechanical" incident - he was killed when he became caught in a conveyor belt pulley.

Of the 168 incidents reported, 21 involved electricity, 24 included fire and 60 related to vehicles either losing control or hitting one another.

Each case represented a lapse of concentration, bad luck or simply terrible timing.

They are distilled into about 25 words by the Department of Natural Resources and Mines but sites and businesses are not named to discourage secrecy.

One man needed stitches after being hit by a rock thrown by a conveyor belt just as he lifted his hard hat to scratch his forehead

Another was cutting steel when a chunk of the saw blade shattered and flew 7m across the workshop, then bouncing back 2m.

A site "fauna collector" needed anti-venom after he was bitten by a snake he was hunting.

Mines and quarries have an average of about 181 incidents or injuries each month.

WA: CCC lay charges over swapping urine samples

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

A woman who allegedly substituted clean urine samples for employees on a North West mine

site has today been charged with more corruption offences.

The 40-year-old former Pathwest employee was one of six people charged with drug, corruption and fraud offences in June following a joint police and Corruption and Crime Commission investigation.

It is alleged she switched clean urine samples for two men while she was working at a Tom Price laboratory.



The woman is now facing three new corruption charges.

Police say she received hundreds of dollars after substituting urine samples for two other people at the same laboratory between March and June this year.

A fourth person, who allegedly supplied the clean urine, has also been charged.

Drug and alcohol tests are commonly used by mining companies to ensure a safe workplace.

The CCC says Pathwest has fully co-operated with the investigation.

Thursday 16 August 2012

WA: Study shows no link between cancer and shift work

Extract from ABC NEWS Online, Aus

A study by Western Australian researchers has shown no link between shift work and breast cancer.

Previous studies have shown disrupting the sleep-wake cycle in mice can cause breast cancers.

But Lin Fritschi from the WA Institute for Medical Research says its new study involving more than 1,000 women shows no link between shift work and cancer.



Photo: A study by WA researchers has shown no link between breast cancer and shift work. (Julian Smith, file photo: AAP)

Professor Fritschi says women with and without breast cancer took part in the study.

"We compared the people who had cancer with those who didn't," she said.

"If shift work is associated with breast cancer, you would expect those women who had breast cancer to have been much more likely to have done shift work in the past, and we didn't find that was the case."

Professor Fritschi says rodents are not an accurate gauge of how humans respond to shift work.

"The thing that we thought was important to note was that humans aren't rats and that we don't completely change our system when we do night shifts," she said.

"We still have family commitments, we still have things going on in our lives, which means that people often don't do the complete adaptation that mice and rats do."

Over sixty reported dead at Congo gold mine

Extract from money.msn.com

KINSHASA (Reuters) - At least 60 miners were killed when a shaft collapsed in a remote part of northeastern Democratic Republic of Congo, where local armed groups complicated rescue efforts, officials said on Thursday.



Small-scale miners work in treacherous conditions at the Kanga-Usine mine in Mongbwalu in Democratic Republic of Congo (file photo)

The local miners were digging for gold in shafts up to 100 meters (109 yards) underground when the accident occurred on Monday in Mambasa territory in Orientale Province, said Simon Pierre Bolombo, the provincial head of mines.

He said the collapse had been caused by a landslide.

"It was deep in the forest, there was a landslide, at least 60 people have been killed," Bolombo told Reuters by telephone from the town of Bunia in northeast Congo.

Congo's minister of mines, Martin Kabwelulu, told Reuters the workers were there illegally and that their shafts were deeper than the 30-metre (32-yard) limit required by the mining code for small-scale mining.

Hundreds of thousands of people in eastern Congo make a living in non-industrial mines, where safety precautions are almost nonexistent and accidents are common.

The area where the mine is situated is currently in the hands of a local rebel group - known as Mai Mai Morgan - which will likely hamper any rescue efforts, Bolombo said.

"(The mine) is controlled by the rebels ... There's almost total insecurity, it's difficult for us (to reach)," he added.

Mining companies AngloGold Ashanti and Randgold operate in the region, which is known to be rich in tin and gold, although the accident did not take place on either company's concession, officials said.

Armed groups across eastern Congo use illegal and small-scale mining to help fund their activities, despite international attempts to stamp out so-called "conflict minerals".

USA: Miner trapped for hours is unharmed

Extract from The Southern, USA

A miner was trapped but rescued without injury when a portion of a roof collapsed Tuesday at American Coal's New Future Mine in Saline County, Illinois.

The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration, which is investigating the accident, did not release the miner's name.

The accident occurred about 9 a.m. in an entry near a loading point intersection.

Officials said a miner was advancing the ventilation curtain when he noticed the roof above starting to fall. He ran out past the portion that fell in, but the collapsed roof sediment entrapped a second miner at the same location.

Mine personnel started rescue operations immediately. An MSHA inspector was present at the mine and preparing to go underground to perform an inspection when the roof fell.

The rescue operation entailed placement of crib supports allowed for an escape path.

The trapped miner was retrieved uninjured at 12:43 p.m., according to MSHA.

W.Va. widows: Mine inspectors must be held liable

Extract from CBS News, USA

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — The widows of two West Virginia coal miners killed in a 2006 fire want the state Supreme Court to rule that private and federal mine safety inspectors can be held legally liable when workers die as a result of their negligence.

Last month, the U.S. 4th Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., said it found no case law, constitutional authority or state statute to definitively answer what it called "a pure question of state law" that has yet to be specifically addressed. It urged the high court to decide the question once and for all, calling it "a matter of exceptional importance" for West Virginia.

On Wednesday, lawyers for Delorice Bragg and Freda Hatfield petitioned for that ruling, arguing the justices should explicitly address a matter of public policy and justice. Failure to squarely address the question, they contend, effectively immunizes inspectors who shirk their duties.

"Death is the gravest possible consequence for negligent conduct, and it cries out for judicial recourse" through compensatory and punitive damages in civil cases and fines, penalties and imprisonment in criminal cases, the petition argues.

"It follows that negligent mine inspections that cause a miner's wrongful death warrant the strongest moral condemnation the state and this court can provide."

The case stems from a 2010 lawsuit filed over the deaths of Don Israel Bragg and Ellery Elvis Hatfield, who were unable to escape a fire at Massey Energy's Aracoma Alma No. 1 mine. Massey was later bought by Virginia-based Alpha Natural Resources.

A faulty ventilation system caused smoke from the fire to flood the mine's escape route, reducing visibility. The miners also struggled to

find an unmarked personnel door in the dark and tried to use their breathing devices but lacked the training to properly activate them.

Ten men made it out alive, but Bragg and Hatfield died of carbon monoxide poisoning. Their widows accused MSHA of negligence, arguing the inspectors who'd failed to do their jobs before the fire should held be liable under state law.

U.S. District Judge John Copenhaver dismissed the case, saying inspectors can't be deemed negligent under state laws as they are currently written.

MSHA has not commented on the appellate court's ruling and didn't immediately comment Wednesday on the new petition.

In the Aracoma case, the widows said, MSHA admitted its inspectors' conduct was sub-par, so it should be held liable.

"To hold otherwise would provide an immunity from liability in circumstances where West Virginia can ill afford it," attorney Bruce Stanley argues in the petition. "Recognition of a duty of care, by stark comparison, will serve the public good."

MSHA's review acknowledged that inspections were insufficient before the fire. In late 2005, for example, MSHA issued 95 citations for safety violations but failed to require corrective actions.

The petition said a favorable ruling from the court would also conform with the oft-stated position of legislators.

"It is no mystery, as the West Virginia Legislature has expressly found, that the coal mining industry is the lifeblood of West Virginia's economy, embedded deeply in the fabric of the state and its people," it says. Some 30,000 people work in the industry that has a payroll of nearly \$2 billion a year, it argues, and the Legislature has repeatedly recognized "the special need to ensure mine safety and the welfare of miners."

West Virginia, after all, has a long history of mine disasters. The nation's single deadliest occurred near Monongah in 1907, claiming 362 men and boys.

In 1968, an explosion at Farmington No. 9 killed 78 men and led to passage of the federal Coal Mine Health and Safety Act. Nineteen of those who died remain entombed there.

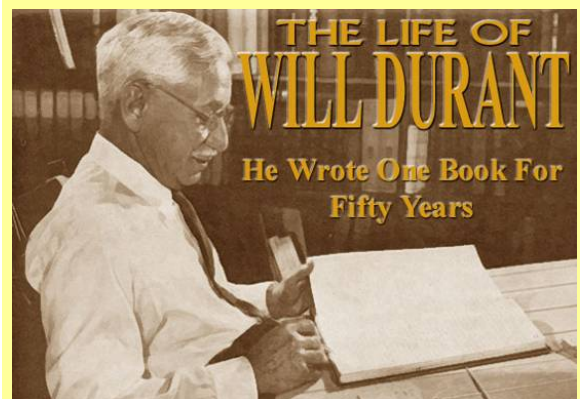
In January 2006, just before the Aracoma fire, 13 men were trapped after an explosion at the Sago Mine. All but one succumbed to carbon monoxide poisoning.

Then, in April 2010, 29 men died when Massey's Upper Big Branch mine exploded. It was the worst U.S. coal mine disaster in four decades.

The petition argues no public policy, statutory or otherwise, suggests that private mine inspectors "should receive special treatment, much less some immunity."

"To the contrary, requiring private mine inspectors to act with reasonable care in the performance of their chosen profession will foster West Virginia's paramount public policy of ensuring mine safety and protecting the miners who work there."

Quote of the week



"Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance."

William Durant,
US Historian & philosopher (1885 - 1981)

Friday 17 August 2012

Riot police open fire on South African miners

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

South African riot police have opened fire on striking miners armed with machetes and sticks at Lonmin's Marikana platinum mine, killing at least a dozen men in the deadliest episode of a week of union violence.

Heavily armed officers backed by armoured vehicles were laying out barbed-wire barricades when they were outflanked by some of the estimated 3,000 miners massed on a rocky outcrop near the mine, 100 kilometres north-west of Johannesburg.

Police opened fire with automatic weapons on a group of men as they burst out from behind a vehicle.

The volley of bullets threw up clouds of dust, which cleared to reveal at least seven bodies lying on the ground.

It was not clear whether the police were fired upon. They appeared to be on edge and with rifles pointing forwards immediately before the incident.

The SAPA domestic news agency said one of its reporters had counted 18 bodies near a squatter camp close to the mine, Lonmin's flagship platinum plant, which was forced to shut down on Tuesday because of the union unrest.

There has been no confirmation of the death toll.

World platinum prices leapt as much as \$30 an ounce - more than 2 per cent - to a six-day high as the extent of the violence became apparent in the country with 80 per cent of the world's known reserves.

Leaders of the radical Association of Mineworkers and Construction Union (AMCU), which was representing most of the strikers, accused police of a massacre.



Photo: The miners faced off with South African police after production was halted following the deaths of 10 people in fighting between rival unions. (Reuters: Siphwe Sibeko)

Some commentators likened the scenes to the pre-1994 days of white-minority apartheid rule, infamous for its pictures and footage of ranks of police opening fire on crowds of black protesters.

"I cannot think of a confrontation between protesters and police since 1994 that has taken place along these lines," said Nic Borain, an independent political analyst.

Before the start of the operation by hundreds of police, officials said several days of talks with AMCU leaders had broken down, leaving no option but to disperse the striking drill operators by force.

"Today is unfortunately D-day," police spokesman Dennis Adriaio said.

Prior to Thursday, 10 people - including two policemen - had died in nearly a week of fighting between rival worker factions at the mine, the latest platinum plant to be hit by an eight-month union turf war in the world's main producer of the precious metal.

The Marikana strikers have not made their demands explicit, although much of the bad blood at the mine stems from AMCU's challenge to the two-decade dominance of the National Union of Mineworkers, which is closely linked to the ruling African National Congress.

Before the confrontation, AMCU president Joseph Mathunjwa, whose organisation has been on a big recruitment push in South Africa's

platinum mines, had said there would be bloodshed if police moved in.

"We're going nowhere," he shouted to cheers from the crowd.

"If need be, we're prepared to die here."

The unrest has forced Marikana's London-headquartered owner to halt production at all of its South African operations, which account for 12 per cent of global platinum output.

At least three people were killed in a similar round of fighting in January that led to a six-week closure of the world's largest platinum mine, run nearby by Impala Platinum.

That disruption helped push the platinum price up 15 per cent.

15 miners rescued in Shaanxi

Extract from ChinaDaily.com.au

Fifteen miners were rescued and one was still missing after a coal mine accident in Fugu county in Yulin, a city in Northwest China's Shaanxi province.

The miners were trapped after a mine roof collapsed.

The rescued miners were sent to a local hospital and were in stable condition, the county's information office said on Friday afternoon.

Rescuers were still searching for the trapped miner.

The accident happened at 1:50 pm on Thursday when 96 miners were working underground. Eighty workers managed to escape uninjured after the accident, but 16 were trapped underground, according to the county's information department of the Chinese Communist Party Committee.

According to a miner surnamed Yan, who was working underground when the accident happened, the roof collapse occurred some 4,000 meters from the mine's pithead.

After the accident, provincial and Yulin city officials went to the mine to organize the rescue operations.



Coal miner Wang Qiming talks to his father on the phone on Friday, while his wife comforts him, after he was rescued in Fugu, Shaanxi province. Wang and 14 of his colleagues were rescued after a roof collapsed at the mine while 96 miners were working underground. One miner is still missing. [Photo / Xinhua]

Fu Jianhua, director of the State Administration of Coal Mine Safety and deputy director of the State Administration of Work Safety, also traveled to the accident spot from Beijing.

Fu urged emergency workers to do their best during the rescue operations. The director also asked local officials to find out what caused the accident and punish those responsible.

The mine, known as Ruifeng Coal Mine and located in the county's Xiaochanghan village, belongs to a company that owns three coal mines with an annual output of 1.5 million tons. The mine has a mining license and a business license, but is lacking a safety license or a coal-production license from the relevant government departments.

The county's information office said that the accident was likely caused by illegal mining as the mine is lacking the appropriate licenses.

The mine owners were asked by police to not leave the area while the rescue operations are under way.

Sunday 19 August 2012

China: Mine owners detained over roof collapse accident

Extract from ChinaDaily.com.au

XI'AN - Police in Northwest China's Shaanxi province have detained the head and his deputy of a coal mine where a roof collapse trapped 16 people underground on Thursday, local publicity official said late Saturday.

Wang Zhiping, head of the Ruifeng Colliery, and his deputy Wen Suoyin were detained by police for suspected crime of major responsibility accident. Vice board chairman Li Junshan has been under police custody.

A total of 96 miners were working underground when the roof of Ruifeng Coal Mine, in Fugu County, collapsed at around 1:30p.m on Thursday. Eighty miners were lifted out of the mine after the accident, while 16 others were trapped underground.

Rescuers have pulled 15 miners out of the mine and continued to search for the last one.

Most of the rescued miners suffer minor injuries and have been sent to a local hospital. They are all in a stable condition.

Local authorities earlier said 18 people were trapped underground and made the correction on Friday.

The mine is having equipment installed and has not yet obtained a production license from the authorities.

An investigation into the accident is underway.

Safety concerns in booming Australian mining industry

Extract from www.3news.co.nz

Half a million Kiwis call Australia home and more are set to follow as the mining boom there continues.

But one Kiwi safety expert believes the influx of inexperienced workers could leave the Australian mining industry vulnerable to a Pike River disaster of its own.

Kathleen Callaghan isn't one to pull any punches.

"There is an expression that says the fish rots from its head," says Ms Callaghan, a safety specialist.

It was November 2011 and Ms Callaghan was telling the Royal Commission what she thought of the "management culture" at Pike River.

She specialises in how human behaviour can cause errors in the workplace. She says Pike River was an "accident waiting to happen".

But could the same be true of the Australian mining industry that is luring thousands of Kiwis?

"There's new legislation; there's unprecedented growth; there's a skills shortage and they have inexperienced workers. Those four issues, each one in themselves have been identified as very much increasing vulnerability, producing of error."

Ms Callaghan raised those very issues with the mining sector at a health safety conference in Australia this weekend.

"We want people to really understand how accidents happen and that those signs of impending doom. The signs that there's a problem are really clearly visible to people that are trained to look for those specific signs well in advance of the accident."

In June, there were 168 serious accidents or high-risk situations recorded at Australian mines.

Each case represented a lapse in concentration, poor timing or just bad luck.

But a company that recruits Kiwis for the Australian mines says everyone gets safety training.

“There is a cost to having accidents on mine site which is prohibitive to business,” says Jason Clayton, director of the OZ Jobs Expo. “It’s something that’s placed in front of production. Health and safety is more important than production.”

Ms Callaghan says human error is involved in 80 to 90 percent of all workplace accidents, but defences can be put in place.

“For inexperience you might think about how you are going to have a buddy system,” she says. “How are those people going to be supervised?”

It’s not a message solely for the Australian mining industry. Ms Callaghan says Kiwi workplaces aren’t doing a good enough job either. Too many people are going to work and not coming home.

This week in mining accident history

Scotland, UK
Underground coal mine

15 August 1883

Colliery Accident in Fife – 3 Men Killed & Four Seriously Injured - Dunfermline Wednesday Night – This afternoon one of the most serious colliery accidents which have occurred in Fifeshire for many years took place at the Dora Pit, Little Raith Colliery, belonging to the Lochgelly Iron Company, and situated six miles to the east of Dunfermline. It appears that the engineman, James Guthrie, stopped winding coal, according to custom, at two o’clock to admit of the miners being brought to the surface. About 150 men were in the mine, and all went well until the raising of the last cage but one, when a terrible accident occurred. On the cage were seven persons- viz, Thomas Adams (51)

and his three sons, Thomas 20, James 16 and John 14; David Paterson 32; Robert Hunter, 41 and his son William 17. Before reaching the landing stage it was apparent that the cage was being wound at more than usual speed. The unfortunate men passed the landing stage shouting to the engineman to stop, and before they had time to attempt to get off they were tossed over the pulley wheels, and the cage fell. The result was that James Adams and his brother John were thrown on to a "bing of blaes" eighty feet distant from the pit mouth, the former being killed on the spot, while the latter was very seriously injured about the head and spine. David Paterson, who was unmarried, was pitched on to the roof of the enginehouse, and afterwards fell to the ground, only surviving his injuries about five minutes. William Hunter was found in the cage, which had stuck fast in the roof, and although taken out alive, he had barely been carried home when he succumbed. The other men were got near the scene of the accident, all more or less seriously injured. Of the remaining four, Robert Hunter was found to be in the most critical condition, and there is no hope whatever of his recovery. Dr Steele and his assistant from Lochgelly, and Dr Nasmyth, Cowdenbeath, were soon on the ground, and rendered what assistance they could. Mr Landale, managing partner of the Company, and Inspector Hunter, of the Fifeshire constabulary, also visited the pit, and in the course of the night Guthrie, the engineman, was arrested and conveyed to Kirkcaldy. The cause of the accident is believed to be overwinding, as the indicator shows that the “drum” had taken one and a half turn more than usual. The winding apparatus was in thoroughgoing condition. Thomas Adams, who is less injured than the rest, was able in the course of the evening to give an account of the winding up the shaft. He stated that during the 40 years he had been engaged in the pits he had never been brought to the bank at such a rapid rate. Guthrie is twenty-five years of age, and has always been considered a good workman. The accident

created a great sensation in the village and thousands of miners visited the spot before darkness had set in [Scotsman 16 August 1883]

The Late Colliery Accident at Cowdenbeath -

On Wednesday evening Thomas Adams, miner, Cowdenbeath, who was injured in the colliery accident at Little Raith Colliery on the 15th ult., died from the effects of his injuries. This is now the fourth death. Adams was 51 years of age, and has left a widow and a grown-up family. One of Adams' sons was killed at the time of the accident and other two injured, but the latter are now in the way of recovery. [Scotsman 7 September 1883]

19 August 1928

Glenraig Miner Killed – A Former Falkirk

Footballer – An accident occurred at Glenraig Colliery, near Lochgelly, last Sunday night, resulting in the death of Robert Woods, 34, miner, who resided at 36 South Glenraig. Deceased was engaged as a miner in the Jersey seam of No 1 pit of the colliery, and was at his usual duties on the night shift when the accident happened. He was caught by a fall of coal and death was instantaneous. Woods, who leaves a widow and four children, was up till two years ago a well known footballer. For several seasons he played for Falkirk, and he was one of the Alloa team which created a sensation in the Scottish Cup competition several seasons ago. [Dunfermline Journal 25 August 1928]

22 August 1849

Fatal Accident - Mr. Begg, coalmaster, Lumphinnans, near Lochgelly, whilst superintending the despatch of coals from one of his pits on Wednesday last, was accidentally thrown across the rails, when a loaded truck passed over both his legs. He was carried home and the best medical aid was early obtained, but nothing could be done to save his life. He expired about five hours after the accident happened. No blame is attachable to anyone. The Scotsman. [Glasgow Herald 27 August 1849]

22 August 1928

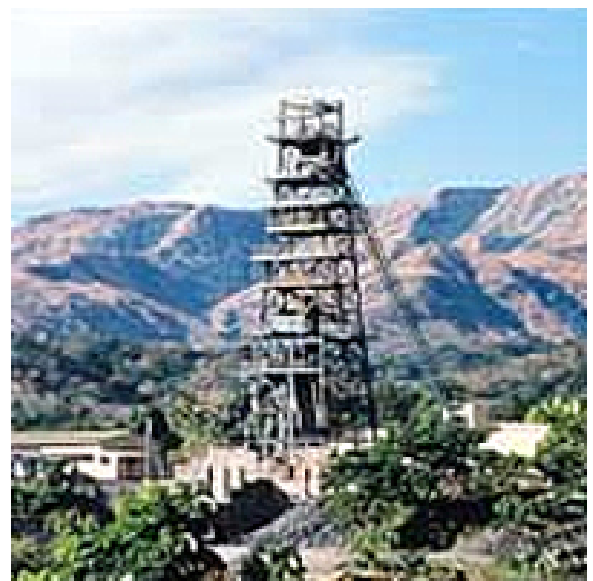
Lochgelly Miner Killed – Robert Fleming, coalcutting machineman, was killed at Glenraig Colliery, Lochgelly on Wednesday morning while at work. He saw a movement in the roof, and fearing a fall of coal made to take refuge at the side of his machine. He was caught in the machinery. His left leg was torn off and death was almost instantaneous. Fleming was 21 years of age. [Dunfermline Journal 25 August 1928]

Monday 20 August 2012

Fiji: 2 mine workers dead in separate incidents

Extract from www.fijivillage.com

Two Vatukoula Gold Mine workers died last week after two separate incidents.



[Vatukoula Gold Mine](#)

27-year-old miner from Korovou, Tavua, Shakir Aktar received injuries while working underground on 7th of this month and died at CWM hospital on Friday.

The deceased's father Aktar Ali said the family is still in shock and cannot believe the sudden passing away of his youngest son.

Ali said his three grandchildren who are still too young, do not know that their father will not be coming back.

He said the children are also without their father this Eid following the tragic incident at the mine.

In another incident last Tuesday, a 35-year-old employee of Vatukoula Gold Mine lost his life in a fatal accident at the mine.

A family friend, Umesh Prasad said the 35-year-old Ravinesh Singh was looking after his wife and two younger brothers in Yasiyasi, Tavua, as their parents have passed away.

In a statement, Vatukoula Gold Mine General Manager David Whittle confirmed that both Police and Mineral Resources Department officials have started an investigation surrounding the circumstances of the incident.

He added that as long as investigations are continuing, no conclusions can be drawn as yet.

On the safety of workers, Vatukoula Gold Mine said the mining industry is a high-risk environment and they strive for the constant implementation of effective training to identify and deal with potential hazards to minimize risk to an acceptable level.

Philippines: 4 coal miners suffer second-degree burns in accident

Extract from www.sunstar.com.ph

CEBU CITY -- A coal mine blast in the mountain village of Lawaan, Danao City, Cebu on Saturday has left four men injured.

The incident raised concerns anew over the safety procedures of the small-scale mining site, after it was suspended two years ago.

SPO1 Lolito Oliverio of Danao City Police Station identified the victims as Arnel Bacang, 28, Rolito Capote, 36, Joseph Manzo, 18, and Cereno Lugas, 56.

The incident happened past 1 p.m. after one of the victims "accidentally" lit a lighter while an electrical short circuit occurred below.

The lighter flame ignited concentrated methane gas, which is highly explosive, causing an explosion.

The miners, who were trapped in the 50-foot-deep hole, were immediately rescued and sent to Danao Provincial Hospital.

Three of the miners were seriously injured after sustaining second degree burns and had to be transferred to a hospital in Cebu City, Oliverio said.

The other miner, who was declared out of harm's way, stayed in the hospital and told police it was their first time to meet an accident.

The victims, all residents in the area, had been working for some time in the mining site, situated 27 kilometers from the town proper.

"They didn't expect it," Oliverio said, adding he still has to contact the owner, Adelina Hermita, if the victims were insured.

Police will investigate if the suspension order on the mining site issued two years ago was lifted.

The Department of Energy (DOE) in Central Visayas suspended the mine after three miners died after falling 100 meters into the coal mine on June 25, 2010.

The three were going down the hole using a drum, but the cable that held the drum snapped.

DOE in Central Visayas issued the indefinite suspension order on the mine for being "lenient in implementing safety regulations."

Zambia: Continue encouraging workers, mines told

Extract from Zambia Daily Mail

Mufulira: The GOVERNMENT has urged mining companies to continue encouraging their workers and contractors to embrace the culture of safety in their workplaces.

Speaking during the 7th inter-company first aid competition at the Mufulira Golf Club on Saturday afternoon, Minister of Mines, Energy and Water Development Yamfwa Mukanga said

in a speech read for him by Copperbelt Minister Mwenya Musenge that mining work is unique, especially underground.

"It is, therefore, important that all companies associated with the mines and operating in the mining environment should have their employees properly trained in first aid for mining. It is for this reason that we are happy when you organise first aid competitions because these competitions enhance first aid skills of workers since the competency of fellow workers can and do save lives of accident victims," Mr Mukanga said.

He said the first aid competition promotes fraternity and rivalry among mining houses and should be encouraged.

Mr Mukanga said this year's inter-company first aid competition theme: "Don't let them die" shows the basic purpose of first aid which is to save life.

"The need for competent first aiders in the mining environment cannot be over-emphasized as one's life can be saved by a competent first aider being available nearby at all times in the event of an accident," Mr Mukanga said.

He said medical personnel cannot be available in all operational areas and they heavily rely on first aiders to help save lives and limbs and prevent further complications in accident victims before they can be transported to medical facilities.

Mr Mukanga also commended the Chamber of Mines of Zambia (CMZ) council for first aid for training and issuing 8,185 first aid certificates in various categories from last September to June this year.

The CMZ council on first aid has issued first aid certificates at Mopani Copper Mines, Chibuluma Mine, China Non-Ferrous Corporation Africa (NFCA), Luanshya Copper Mines (CLM), First Quantum Mines and Minerals and Chambishi Copper Smelter (CCS).

Others are Chambishi Metals, Konkola Copper Mines (KCM) and Barrick Lumwana Mine.

"This is an increase of over 25 percent over the previous year. This is a great achievement for mining companies and indeed a tribute to the council for its first aid efforts to ensure the training is carried out to the required standard," Mr Mukanga said.

He is, however, concerned that there is still a long way to go for all the mines, especially the small-scale ones and those outside the Copperbelt to be compliant with mining regulations.

MCM chief executive officer Danny Callow said MCM recognises that mining is an accident-prone industry and it is essential for workers to be well-versed in first aid skills.

"Mopani greatly values first aid training because the skills acquired can save life. It is therefore not surprising that Mopani was the first mining company to revive the inter-departmental first aid competitions in 2003 and subsequently hosted the first intercompany first aid competition post privatisation of the mines in 2006," Mr Callow said.

He also said MCM has seen significant reductions in injury rates.

He said MCM has this year reduced lost time accidents although it sadly lost two workers through mine accidents.

CMZ president Emmanuel Mutati said CMZ will ensure all its members are compliant with mining regulations regarding the provision of first aid in the mining industry.

"The council for first aid will continue to provide supervision and carry out mine inspections of all the mining houses on a continuous basis," Mr Mutati said

He is also happy that the number of mining first aid training houses that have been affiliated to the CMZ council has increased from six to nine in the past two years.

China Non-Ferrous Corporation Africa (NFCA) Chambishi Mine won the first aid competition while MCM Smelter was second best.

China Non-Ferrous Metal Mining Corporation Luanshya Copper Mines (CLM) won the third prize from a total of 18 first aid teams that participated in the competition.

Qld: Mine forum spotlights safety advances

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

One of the country's biggest mining conferences has begun overnight in Townsville in north Queensland.

The Queensland Mining Industry Health and Safety Conference showcases developments in safety standards across the industry.

Conference chairman Stewart Bell says despite one fatality this year, the industry is continuing to work hard to raise the safety standard.

"What it's really looking at is the fact that in the mining industry in the last couple of years there's a lot of new people joined the industry those people need to be trained, they need to be working safely otherwise they'll hurt themselves or hurt their workmates," he said.

Mr Bell says there have been big advances in safety technology.

He says the mining accident at Pike River in New Zealand in 2010 led to the creation of a significant piece of safety equipment.

"The GAG [Gniczy Agregat Gasniczy] jet engine was another thing that was used at Pike and it was used just recently," he said.

"There was a heating or a spontaneous combustion at a coal mine in central Queensland about a month ago and the GAG was used there as well, so that sort of equipment is in use from time to time and it's very specialised and it's something that's worth having a look at."

USA: MSHA's Main reflects on two-plus years dealing with UBB disaster, safer practices

Extract from Beckley Register-Herald, USA

BLUEFIELD — The road that Joseph A. Main has taken since his appointment more than two years ago to serve as assistant secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health has been challenging. He had only been on the job less than eight months when the worst coal mining tragedy in the past 40 years stunned the coal industry — the Upper Big Branch Mine explosion in Raleigh County that claimed the lives of 29 coal miners.

"The UBB Mine explosion caused us to take a step back and look at the weaknesses in the safety net that is expected to protect the nation's miners," Main said of the incident that has defined his tenure of service. "MSHA's extensive investigation of the tragedy identified a workplace culture promoted by the operator that valued production over safety, including practices that fostered and encouraged noncompliance and prevented workers from speaking out about unsafe and unhealthy conditions in the mine."

Main was one of the keynote speakers at last week's Bluefield Coal Symposium. Prior to Main's speech — mostly from prepared remarks — Bill Reid, symposium chair, made it clear that Main would not take questions from the floor at the conclusion of his remarks. However, the audience included several people whom Main knew by name. He displayed a relaxed familiarity with Reid and smiled as he surprisingly opened the floor up to questions.

Main's speech took on a somber note when he talked about being in Whitesville on July 27 for the dedication of the monument to the 29 miners who died at Upper Big Branch.

"It is a marker we are placing on this spot on the earth as a reminder that we can never forget that we must not let these tragedies involving the loss of miners' lives ever happen again," he

said, recalling the remarks he made at the dedication.

Main started working in the coal mines of southwestern Pennsylvania in 1967, a year before the explosion at Consol's No. 9 Mine near Farmington and Mannington claimed the lives of 78 coal miners — as a result of either fire, suffocation or lack of rescue. Main, who grew up in mostly rural Greene County, Pa., became an advocate for coal mine safety in his career. In 1974, he was hired by the United Mine Workers of America to serve as an assistant to (then) International President Arnold Miller, and in 1982 (then) UMWA President Rich Trumpka appointed him to serve as administrator of the union's Occupational Health and Safety Department; he remained in that position for 22 years.

Prior to Main's remarks at the symposium, some of the speakers had discussed alternatives to Main's "Rules to Live By" approach to mine safety, and recommended other approaches. During the question-and-answer period after his presentation, Main said he was not opposed to an open conversation about the various ideas of mine safety. "I think we ought to welcome that," he said.

In an interview after his speech, Main said that in the two-plus years since the disaster at Upper Big Branch, he has worked most on "changing the culture in the coal mining industry" that led to the tragedy. "It has been our intention to give (MSHA) mine inspectors (and coal miners) the tools they need to help maintain a safe work environment."

Main said he is aware that the steps MSHA has taken to be more aggressive with various enforcement initiatives have not all been welcomed by the coal industry, but he added that there is no opposition to efforts that safeguard the lives of coal miners. "We owe it to the miners to do this," he said.

"I think we are making headway," he said of the push for greater mine safety. "No one can really

be satisfied until there are no mining fatalities or injuries."

In addition to changing the culture, Main said the ongoing research and development on equipment like proximity detection will make coal mine environments safer in the future.

Coal dust explosion suppression system successfully tested

Extract from Mineweb

Two Australian companies say that they have successfully tested an automatic coal dust explosion suppression system which could have significant coal mine safety implications worldwide.

LONDON - What many non-coal miners don't realise is that the real killer explosions, which tragically can sometimes cause major death and destruction in underground coal mines are only triggered by an ignition of methane gas. The main lethal element is a subsequent coal dust explosion set off by the methane ignition which itself can be relatively small and of short duration. Traditionally the preventative measure employed by many coal mines is to use stone dust barriers where the stone dust mixes with coal dust and mitigates, or prevents altogether, a subsequent coal dust explosion but this has proved not always to be 100% effective in guarding against these horrific events.

Consequently much research has been undertaken over the years to come up with a system which is more efficient in suppressing such dust explosions and much of this revolves around instantaneous automatic water spraying to suppress a spread of such an explosion. Much research has been undertaken in the civil tunnelling sector on similar anti-explosion systems, although this has obviously not been in respect of coal dust events which can spread right throughout a mine's underground workings with the potential to cause widespread loss of life - not only from the effects of an explosion

itself but from toxic gases and lack of oxygen which result.

BMT WBM, an Australian subsidiary of UK headquartered BMT Group, and SkillPro Services, also from Australia, have just announced that they have successfully suppressed a coal dust explosion using their Active Barrier prototype system in the CSIR's experimental tunnel in Kloppersbos, South Africa. The companies say that his system could play an integral role in enhancing the future safety of coal miners.

Historically, coal dust explosions have been the number one cause of fatalities within underground coal mines and even today, despite the use of various passive countermeasures, these explosions cause many deaths worldwide.

David Proud, Business Development Manager for BMT WBM's Machinery group comments: "Using a sensor to detect the approaching coal dust deflagration, the Active Barrier system successfully injected 120 litres of water within 250 milliseconds in order to suppress the explosion, as was predicted by BMT WBM's computational fluid dynamics (CFD) modelling. This is a ground breaking development - one which could help to mitigate the risks of coal dust explosions occurring in underground coal mines."

BMT WBM and SkillPro have been involved in this R&D project for several years with the financial support of the Australian coal industry research body, ACARP. BMT WBM has been modelling the physics and chemistry involved in the entrainment, devolatilisation and combustion of the coal dust particles and the injection and vaporisation of the suppressant. CFD was also used to simulate a range of designs for the prototype suppression device, in order to arrive at a practical and reliable experimental unit. SkillPro designed the final test apparatus and managed the test programme.

The ACARP Underground R&D committee has recently awarded the SkillPro/BMT WBM team an excellence award for the research and development undertaken on the Active Barrier project.

David Humphreys, SkillPro's Manager of the Active Barrier project comments: "A zero harm approach remains top priority for mining companies and SkillPro and BMT WBM are committed to helping their customers achieve this through the development of a range of innovative systems such as the Active Barrier. The success of this test programme is another huge leap forward and we hope that we can continue our R&D work to further develop this pioneering product."

UK: Fears over Welsh mine rescue service

Extract from South Wales Guardian

A FORMER Betws county councillor and ex-collier has expressed "grave concern" over the future of the Mines Rescue Service in Wales, which played a key role in last year's Gleision mine disaster.

Dr John Dorian Evans said that unless a shortfall in funding was urgently addressed, Wales could face losing the service altogether.

Dr Evans, of 1 Argoed Cottage, spent 20 years underground and is considered an expert on the history of the industry, writing extensively on the subject.

His concerns echoed those of MP Jonathan Edwards who said he also feared for the service.

From its Welsh base in the Rhondda, the service raises about £15,000 per year through a levy on mine owners, but produces most of its income through training and safety courses.

However, the income falls short of the amount needed to maintain the service.

"I equate the Mines Rescue Service with the fire service, the ambulance and the police," said Dr Evans. "The issue of a funding shortfall is of

grave concern, not least because of the Gleision disaster.

"The service remains essential in this area due to the continued extraction of coal in the lower Neath valley and the fact that a great many people from the Amman Valley work in these mines.

"It is vital that the service remains UK-wide with a base here in Wales, and I believe that central government and the Welsh Assembly Government has an incumbent duty to ensure the service remains.

"There is a need for Her Majesty's inspectorate of mines to show clear direction on this.

They should be doing whatever they can to provide funding.

"The central government and the Welsh Assembly government must make a contribution to the running of the service.

"Unless the matter of the shortfall in funding is addressed there will be no mines rescue service left in Wales."

S African miner issues ultimatum to workers, despite killings

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

In South Africa, the mining company which employed the 34 workers who were shot dead in the worst incident of police violence since the end of apartheid is threatening to sack its remaining striking miners, unless they return to work. The London-listed platinum miner, Lonmin, says the ultimatum stands, despite the deaths and the days of official mourning.

Tuesday 21 August 2012

S Africa mine reopens after deadly clashes

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

The South African platinum mine where police shot 34 striking workers dead says it has

reopened its Marikana facility after the 11-day strike.

The world's third-largest platinum miner Lonmin also softened its tone, extending by another day its deadline for 3,000 strikers to return to the job. After earlier threatening to sack them, the company also said they could face "disciplinary action".

"Lonmin can confirm that work at its Marikana operations resumed today as significant numbers of employees returned to work. Almost one-third of the 28,000-strong workforce reported for their morning shifts on Monday," it said in a statement.

Lonmin had pulled down its shutters last week after 3,000 rock drill operators embarked on a violent strike that initially claimed 10 lives before police shot dead 34 of the protesters last Thursday.

The company at the weekend urged its 25,000 non-striking workers and 10,000 contractors to return to the job, insisting they will be safe.

"Those illegal strikers who did not return to work this morning will not be dismissed and have been allowed an extra day in light of current circumstances," the company said in a statement.

About 27 per cent of the workforce reported for the morning shift Monday, it said.

Lonmin's executive vice president for mining, Mark Munroe, in a statement after talks with union representatives, acknowledged the tragedy but stressed the need to return to normal.

"What has happened here has been a tragedy, and the pain and anger it has led to will take time to heal," he said.

"But those representing the vast majority of our workforce have been clear again in our discussions today that we need to try to return to some kind of normality as we go through that healing process.

"Tens of thousands of people's livelihoods rely on Lonmin, as well as much of the local infrastructure we provide in terms of health, water, education and housing."

Qld: Mines urged to hire better qualified health experts

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

A leading health academic says mining companies should consider employing health professionals with a greater level of experience and training to work at mine sites.

Flinders University professor of paramedics, Hugh Grantham, is one of the speakers at the Queensland Mining Industry Health and Safety Conference in Townsville.

He says the industry needs to place a stronger emphasis on the skill level of health practitioners who work at the mines.

"The difficulty is that the basic qualifications are not well defined and not uniform at the moment," he said.

"A true health professional, tertiary qualified nurse or paramedic who's up to date, is a godsend in a remote area, particularly when back-up can be hours and hours away."

USA: Miner Breaks Pelvis in Accident

Extract from MetroNews, W.Va, USA

A Maryland coal miner is recovering at Ruby Memorial Hospital in Morgantown after breaking his pelvis while working at a Garrett County mine Monday.

Officials with the Mine Safety and Health Administration say the man was crushed between mining equipment and the actual mine walls at about 10:15 a.m. Monday. The incident happened at the Steyer Fuel Mining Company site along King Wildesen Road.

The worker, who has not been identified, was taken by medical helicopter to Ruby after being extricated from the mine. Emergency officials

from several local agencies were on scene for about 90 minutes, according to Garrett County 911.

MSHA says the section of the mine where the accident happened is still shut down as an investigation continues.

Wednesday 22 August 2012

China: Death toll likely to hit 20 in Jilin mine accident

Extract from Xinhua

CHANGCHUN - The death toll from a coal mine accident in Northeast China's Jilin province is likely to hit 20, as 13 miners trapped in the collapsed mine for 10 days have slim chances of surviving, according to the rescue headquarters.

A spokesman with the headquarters said on Wednesday that a high density of gas had prevented rescuers from getting down to the pit owned by Jisheng Coal Mine in the city of Baishan, after an accident triggered by a coal and gas burst happened at around 6 am on August 13.

He said rescuers were able to enter the mine on Tuesday to clear the blockage in the mine shaft. Some of them said they could smell the odor of dead bodies.

The mine shaft collapsed after the gas burst, killing four miners and trapping 17 others underground. Rescuers lifted four miners to ground, but three of them died in hospital.

Mining managers from China to undergo safety training in W.Va.

Extract from The Republic

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Mining managers from China's top coal-producing province will undergo safety training in southern West Virginia.

The group will be trained at the Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College.

The managers from Shanxi Province are touring the college's facilities Thursday and plan to sign an agreement to promote collaboration in safe mining and mine rescue practices.

A signing ceremony is set for Thursday afternoon at the Governor's Mansion. First Lady Joanne Jaeger Tomblin is the technical college's president. Others expected to attend include West Virginia University President James Clements.

The technical college is in the application process to accept international students, so the group of managers will enroll through WVU, which will contract with the technical college to provide the training.

The managers plan to return for training next month.

South Africa mourns mine massacre victims

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

Family and friends of the 34 workers killed at a platinum mine north of Johannesburg have gathered for an emotional memorial service.

Christian hymns sung in Zulu and Xhosa rang out from a tent near the site of South Africa's bloodiest police action since apartheid, as thousands gathered to mourn the dead.

Police gunned down the miners one week ago during a strike that had already left eight other workers and two policemen dead.

"We are shocked as a nation about what happened. None of us ever thought it would happen again," Anglican bishop Johannes Seoka told the thousands of people gathered near Lonmin's Marikana platinum mine.

After the bishop's remarks, the crowd burst into an apartheid-era Zulu funeral song, "Senzeni na", which means "What have we done?"

Police kept their distance as tensions still ran high among workers, with security remarkably lighter than the heavy forces deployed in the area for more than a week.

"We don't want to see police today, they must stay far away," said Nkosinathi, a Lonmin miner who declined to give his last name for fear of reprisal.

"They bring back very ugly, very painful memories, they must move away."

Lonmin and the nearby Impala Platinum mine closed to allow workers to attend the memorial, the centrepiece of ceremonies held across the country, as many of the victims were migrant workers whose bodies have already returned to their home villages.

Politicians were notably absent from the memorials, staying away to allow religious leaders to control proceedings.

President Jacob Zuma, who met with miners on Wednesday, did not attend any of the memorials.

But later in the day he announced the terms of reference for a judicial inquiry into the killings.

Mining company Lonmin, the police, unions and government will all be scrutinised.

A four-month deadline to report has been set.

Police are also investigating the killings, while the independent police watchdog is looking into the conduct of the officers who opened fire at miners who were armed mainly with spears, clubs and machetes.

Mining dictionary

A guide to coal mining terminology

B

Bleeder or bleeder entries Special air courses developed and maintained as part of the mine ventilation system and designed to continuously move air-methane mixtures emitted by the gob or at the active face away from the active workings and into mine-return air courses. Alt: Exhaust ventilation lateral.

-Ed