



Mining Accident News No.1219

24 to 31 August 2012

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Friday 24 August 2012

Indonesia: Sometime This Week Someone Will Die, Buried Alive, Mining for the Tin That Goes In Your Cellphone

Extract from www.businessinsider.com

Tin is used to solder parts in smartphones, tablet computers, and a bunch of other electronics that we all use all the time, every day.

A third of the world's tin comes from a place in Indonesia called Bangka Island.

About once week, someone mining for tin on Bangka Island dies, buried beneath mud or in some other similar accident.

The rate of accidents is increasing. Tin is getting scarcer, and mining companies are digging deeper, more dangerous mines to go after it.

Not all of these mining operations are legal, but no one is getting arrested.

Activists want mining companies and the electronics suppliers who buy from them to contribute to a fund that a third party will use to improve safety. The cause is slow-going.

S. Africa: Concern about rise in platinum mine deaths

Extract from www.miningweekly.com

The number of mine accident fatalities during the first six months of the year was 64, compared with 55 in the corresponding 2011 period, primarily because of a 29% increase in fatalities on platinum mines, says trade union Solidarity.

"Gold mines, in general, are much deeper than platinum mines, which mean that factors such as poor ground conditions and seismicity usually add to the safety risk of gold mines. Therefore, platinum mines are presumed to be safer than gold mines," says Solidarity spokesperson Leigh McMaster.

However, the number of deaths on gold mines has risen by only 13% during the first six months of the year, while those at platinum mines have increased by 29%, says head of Solidarity's occupational health and safety division Advocate Paul Mardon.

Some of the concerns in the platinum industry are labour unrest resulting from the emergence of an unrecognised union in the industry, low platinum-group metals (PGMs) prices as a result of a supply-demand imbalance in the market

and input costs rising to levels above that of inflation, states Solidarity.

“Mine managers and employees find it difficult to maintain their focus on and continue improving the safety interventions and programmes amid the unfavourable climate,” the union points out.

“Most fatalities in the platinum industry are attributed to fall-of-ground incidents, as well as transport- and machinery-related incidents,” says McMaster.

These risk factors have been the main areas of concern for many years and, although the fatalities associated with these incidents have decreased, they are still responsible for 60% of all the fatalities in the mining industry, he adds.

“This year, we have seen a slight increase in the number of incidents related to these risk factors.”

McMaster explains that the risks on mines are determined by a variety of factors, such as the geology, design and layout of the mine; the effectiveness of safety controls; the competence of employees; and the strength of the mine culture.

The union says it is part of various tripartite bodies at industry level which design and recommend strategies that mines should implement to improve their safety systems and culture.

“We, together with the National Union of Mineworkers and other stakeholders, are developing the culture transformation framework, which tackles issues such as implementing leading practices, improving risk management and leadership, as well as eliminating discrimination in the mining industry,” McMaster states.

At company level, the union is reviewing the operations of several mining companies to improve their safety programmes and strategies so that they are more in line with local and international leading practices.

“Stakeholders in the mining industry have all signed the Tripartite Action Plan to eliminate

injuries and fatalities on mines. We are, therefore, saddened by the continuous loss of life,” McMaster states.

Solidarity analysed the mining industry’s Tripartite Action Plan to highlight the areas where urgent intervention by the Mine Health and Safety Council (MHSC) was necessary to ensure that obstacles to safety were removed and action was implemented to meet sustainable development targets. The MHSC was established in terms of the Mine Health and Safety Act.

“We regard the retention and development of scarce skills as key in achieving the Mining Charter objectives and will partner with employers and other stakeholders to start training initiatives,” the union points out.

However, McMaster says some companies in the mining industry have been reluctant to take part in, or implement, the initiatives developed by industry bodies.

“Some leading practices emanating from the Mining Industry Occupational Safety & Health learning hub adoption teams, as well as recommendations from the Mine Health and Safety Council, have been ignored by some companies,” he explains.

These companies have often cited site-specific conditions and their own safety strategies as excuses for not implementing or participating in the discussions about leading safety practices.

There are, however, some pockets of excellence, Solidarity states.

Platinum mining company Lonmin’s Marikana operations achieved four-million fatality-free shifts on May 15; however, it reported in June that an employee had been killed in an accident at the company’s Rowland shaft.

The shaft will be closed until an investigation by the Department of Mineral Resources has been completed.

“While the fatality at Marikana in June is unfortunate and saddening for the mining

industry, Lonmin's record is an example of one of those companies that have steadily improved their safety culture and proves that mine fatalities can, therefore, be controlled," McMaster points out.

He adds that Solidarity is excited about the formation of a mining industry CEO 'elimination of fatalities task team', which has been formed to fast-track the implementation of industry milestones.

"We want to applaud the CEOs for taking leadership in this regard. The focus of the CEOs should be to create stronger leadership among senior management," he concludes.

China's coal mining still high-risk industry

Extract from ChinaDaily, Europe edition

BEIJING - A spokesman for China's work safety regulator said on Friday that coal mining remains a high-risk industry in the country despite improvements over the past decade.

Speaking at a press conference in Beijing, Huang Yi, of the State Administration of Work Safety, said that 35 workers are currently killed in coal mines for every 100 million tonnes of coal output in the country, about 10 times the death rate in the United States.

Small coal mines, accounting for about 85 percent of the nation's 12,000 mines, are the biggest source of danger due to poor safety provisions. They cause two thirds of the all deaths annually in the sector, even though their output makes up only one third of the nation's total, said Huang.

The spokesman said the nation aims to close another 625 small coal mines this year in an attempt to reduce the number of deadly accidents.

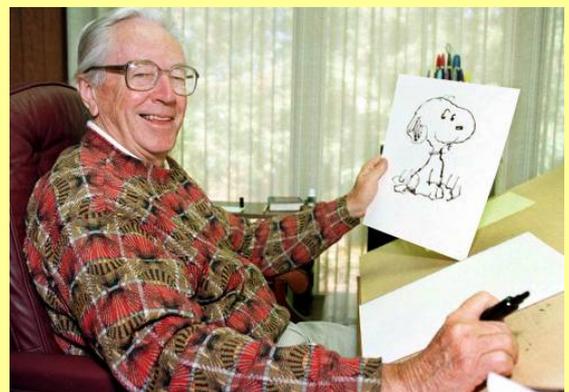
In recent years, authorities have been pressing ahead in these efforts by setting timetables for mines to improve safety measures, while ordering them to invest more to beef up facilities.

New rules released in April require that dangerous mining enterprises funnel at least 30 yuan (\$4.70) for each tonne of production back into improving safety.

"We must stay clear-headed all the time and be on alert for coal mine safety," according to Huang.

Government data showed that 1,973 miners were killed in coal mine accidents in 2011, 19 percent fewer than in 2010.

Quote of the week



"Don't worry about the world coming to an end today. It's already tomorrow in Australia."

Charles M. "Sparky" Shultz
US cartoonist (1922 - 2000)

Sunday 26 August 2012

Russia: Two die, four hospitalized as a result of mine accident in Yakutia

Extract from Russia Beyond The Headlines

The Sakha Republic - Updated reports say that two people died in a Sunday accident in a mine constructed for the development of Vostochnoye orebody of Udachninsky GOK of ALROSA, the Russian diamond mining giant, the press service of the Yakutian department of the Emergency Situations' Ministry reports.

"A total of six people suffered from the accident, two of them died," the press service said.

Earlier reports spoke of four people being injured.

The accident occurred at the depth of 365 meters. There were 17 people in the accident zone, 12 of whom returned to the surface and five remained underground.

Out of the 12 four were taken to Udachninskoye town hospital with injuries. Doctors said three were in condition of medium gravity and one in critical condition.

The five people remaining underground were retrieved by the Yakutian division of a paramilitary mining rescue team, two of them inanimate. The three others were in satisfactory condition and did not require medical assistance.

This week in mining accident history

26 August 1990
Mramor Coal Mine
Dobrnja-Jug, Tuzia, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Underground coal mine
Methane gas explosion
178 killed

The Dobrnja-Jug mine disaster was a mining accident that happened on 26 August 1990 near Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The accident occurred in the Dobrnja-jug shaft of the 40-year-old Mramor coal mine. The mine was operated by the *Kreka* company, which operates three other mines in the area. All of the lignite coal mined in the region is used to power the Tuzla thermoelectric power plant.

Between 01:20 and 01:30 a.m. on 26 August 1990 a methane gas explosion 1,600 feet below the surface caused a cave-in which buried the entire third shift who were near the site of the explosion. All 178 miners working in the shaft were killed. One miner, who operated the machinery which brought the lignite to the surface was the sole survivor.

Rescue workers dug desperately through twisted metal and rubble to try to reach the men buried 1,600 feet below the surface but said there was no chance of finding anyone alive.

"I don't think there are any survivors," a rescue worker, Stevo Mitrovic, said as he fought back tears, his face blackened by coal. "Everything has collapsed down there. It's horrible."

The Dobrnja-jug disaster was the worst mining and industrial accident in the history of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, surpassing the death toll of 128 in a cave-in caused by a methane explosion in 1965 at the Orasi shaft of the Kakanj mine.

Extract from
The New York Times, USA; 27 August 1990

Monday 27 August 2012

Mexico: Fatal Accident at Palmarejo Mine

Extract from Financial Post, USA

Coeur d'Alene Mines Corporation ("Coeur") reported that a fatality took place late Sunday morning at the Company's Palmarejo silver and gold mine in Mexico.



The incident occurred outside the underground mine in the vicinity of the south portal and involved an employee who fell while performing maintenance work on a piece of surface equipment. The appropriate authorities have been notified and the incident is under investigation by the Company and the local police. Work in the underground portion of the mine has been suspended pending completion of the investigation. The open pit mine and milling facilities remain in operation.

The Palmarejo Mine is located 420 kilometers by road southwest of the state capital city of Chihuahua and 15 kilometers northwest of the town of Témoris. Palmarejo employs over 900 people while contractor employment totals about 150.

Seven trapped in mine roof collapse, N China

Extract from Xinhua

TAIYUAN, -- Seven miners were trapped after the roof of a coal mine collapsed on Monday morning in Luliang, Shanxi Province, the local government said.

Around 6:40 a.m. Monday, a 10-meter-long mine roof collapsed in the Nuanquan Coal Mine in Zhongyang County, Luliang, according to the city government.

Thirteen miners were working in the mine when the collapse occurred, including six who have been pulled up from the mine.

Rescuers rushed to the scene and have made contact with the seven trapped miners.

As of 1:00 p.m. Monday, the safety of all the miners had been confirmed.

Rescue work is underway, said rescuers.

Tuesday 28 August 2012

China: Report on fatal coal mine accident released

Extract from ChinaDaily, USA

BEIJING - Nineteen people who were responsible for a deadly coal mine accident that occurred in southwest China's Yunnan province last November have been transferred to judicial organs, according to a report released Tuesday by the State Council's investigation team.

The accident occurred at the Sizhuang Coal Mine in Shizong county of the city of Qujing on the morning of November 10, 2011, when a powerful gas explosion hit two underground platforms.

The fatal accident killed 43 people and caused 39.7 million yuan (\$6.3 million) in direct economic losses.

The report suggested that 13 others who were also responsible for the accident be given disciplinary sanctions.

The Sizhuang Coal Mine must pay 5 million yuan in fines and be shut down, while mine head Zhang Sixing must pay a fine equal to 80 percent of his income for the previous year, according to the report.

The investigation team blamed the accident on illegal operation, lax safety supervision, dereliction of duty and inadequate accident prevention measures.

China has stepped up its efforts to close small illegal mines in recent years to curb accidents. The mortality rate per 1 million tonnes of coal fell to 0.564 deaths in 2011 from the high of 4.94 in 2002.

China: Death toll rises to 10 in mine blast

Extract from Xinhua

The death toll from an explosion Aug 27 at a mine in Yingde, Guangdong province, reached 10 as a missing person was confirmed dead.

The explosion took place when workers unloaded explosives from the last of three trucks carrying more than 13 metric tons of explosives and detonators to a mine owned by a local cement company.

The cause of the explosion is still unknown.

Six tons of explosives and 460 detonators weren't set off but experts are still examining them to see whether there is a risk of explosion.

The glass window of some houses in Yinghong town, separated by a river from the mine, were broken by the shock of the explosion. Nine local residents were slightly injured and the town suffered an economic loss of about 7 million yuan (\$1.1 million).

India: One dead, another missing in coal mine accident

Extract from rediff news & SME Times, India

A miner was on Tuesday killed while an official went missing after water gushed into a coal mine of the Central Coalfields Limited (CCL) in Jharkhand's Bokaro district during excavation of coal.



Over 80 miners managed to come out following the accident at the Dhori colliery of Central Coalfields Ltd at Bermo, about 130 km from Ranchi.

The disaster happened when a blast aimed at excavating coal damaged the wall of the mine.

As the first shift was nearing to end around 1 pm, suddenly large volumes of water gushed into the inclined pit following the blast, sweeping away the two, the official said.

Other miners managed to come out, he added.

"A few miners including mines manager P.K Singh and mining sardar Ajay Kant were in the mine when the incident took place," The body of Abhay Kant Yadav was fished out by the rescue team from the Dhori-Khas underground mine an official of the CCL said at Ranchi.

Wednesday 29 August 2012

Coal mine accident kills 6 in north-west China

Extract from www.straitstimes.com, Singapore

BEIJING - Six miners have died in a coal mine accident in north-west China's restive Xinjiang

region, according to the country's official Xinhua news agency.

The accident happened on Tuesday evening at the Hongxing Coal Mine in Changji City, the report quoted the region's mine safety supervisory agency as saying. The cause was not immediately known.

Rescuers have discovered six bodies, and six injured miners have been rushed to hospital for treatment, a mining official told the agency.

The privately-owned mine has an annual production capacity of 90,000 tonnes, the report added.

China: 7 miners rescued after trapped for 42 hours

Extract from Xinhua, China

Seven miners who were trapped for nearly two days after the roof of a coal mine collapsed in North China's Shanxi province were rescued on Wednesday, local government sources said.

The miners walked out of the pit by themselves with the assistance of the rescuers in the early hours of Wednesday morning, sources with the Zhongyang county government said.

All of the seven, who are now under medical observation in a local hospital, were trapped Monday morning after a 10-meter-long mine roof collapsed at the Nuanquan Coal Mine.

Thirteen miners were working in the mine when the collapse occurred. Six of them had been pulled up from the mine.

UBB sentencing delayed again as probe continues

Extract from Charleston Gazette, USA

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A federal judge has again postponed the sentencing of a former Upper Big Branch Mine superintendent, after prosecutors said the delay would assist their ongoing criminal investigation of the April 2010 mine disaster that killed 29 workers.

U.S. District Judge Irene Berger has rescheduled the sentencing hearing for Gary May for Jan. 17. The sentencing had been set for Oct. 4 in Beckley, after being delayed from earlier this month.

Earlier this week, Assistant U.S. Attorney Steve Ruby said in a court filing that May "is cooperating in an ongoing investigation and the parties need additional time to fully develop the extent of his cooperation."

Ruby added, "The additional time sought ... will allow significant further development of the investigation" into the April 5, 2010, explosion at a Massey Energy mine in Raleigh County.

In a plea deal with prosecutors, May admitted that he plotted "with others known and unknown" to put coal production ahead of worker safety and to conceal the resulting hazards on numerous occasions at Upper Big Branch. May admitted that he took part in a scheme to provide advance warning of government inspections and then hide or correct violations before federal agents could make it into working sections of the mine.

For example, May, after learning that federal Mine Safety and Health Administration inspectors were about to sample the level of coal dust in the mine, "surreptitiously redirected" additional fresh air to the area to conceal actual working conditions in the mine.

May also "caused and ordered" the disabling of a methane monitor on a continuous mining machine at Upper Big Branch less than two months before the deadly blast.

May also ordered an unnamed person to falsify mine examination records by omitting a hazardous condition -- high water that could endanger workers and interfere with the flow of fresh air through underground tunnels.

Federal, state and independent investigations have blamed the worst U.S. coal-mining disaster in nearly 40 years on widespread safety violations, including a systematic failure by Massey management to comply with rules

aimed at controlling the buildup underground of explosive coal dust.

The delay in May's sentencing puts that matter on a similar timeline to the delay Berger ordered in a civil case filed by former Massey shareholders who say the company lied to them about its safety record.

In July, when prosecutors asked Berger to force that delay in the civil case, they said the criminal investigation of the mine disaster "is in a critical period, developing valuable information that became available only recently."

So far, May is the third person to be charged in the federal criminal investigation at Upper Big Branch.

Thomas Harrah, a former miner at the site, was sentenced to 10 months in jail after he admitted to faking a foreman's license when he performed key mine safety examinations at the mine between January 2008 and August 2009 and then lying to investigators about his actions.

Former Massey Energy security director Hughie Elbert Stover is appealing a three-year jail sentence he received after being convicted of lying to investigators and trying to destroy evidence about Massey's practice of warning underground workers of impending government inspections.

In December, Goodwin and his team secured a \$209.5 million settlement with Alpha Natural Resources, which acquired the Upper Big Branch Mine when it bought Massey Energy.

Goodwin agreed not to prosecute the company for any Upper Big Branch criminal liabilities, but required Alpha to spend \$80 million during the next two years on mine safety improvements and create a \$48 million mine safety research trust fund. Alpha also agreed to pay \$46.5 million in restitution to families of the disaster victims and \$35 million to resolve pending Massey safety fines, including \$10.8 million levied for violations related to the Upper Big Branch explosion.

The settlement with Alpha, however, did not prohibit prosecutors from pursuing charges against any individuals -- including Massey officers, employees or agents -- who played a role in the mine disaster.

Thursday 30 August 2012

Qld: Blasting accident destroys dozer at Saraji

Extract from Australian Mining, Aus

A blasting accident earlier this week at BMA's Saraji coal mine has destroyed a Cat D11 dozer.

The dozer was reportedly crushed by massive chunks of overburden on Monday, according to the Daily Mercury.

Luckily no workers were injured during the incident, as they were all well outside of the set exclusion zone.



"At approximately 2pm, a bulldozer parked in the equipment zone was destroyed by flying overburden during blasting operations," a Queensland Department of Natural Resources spokesperson said.

"No personnel were near the vehicle or injured during the incident.

The event has currently forced BMA to stop all blasting operations at the site while management reviews its blasting procedures.

It is believed that the dozer belongs to contractor HSE Mining.

Blast kills 19 in Chinese coal mine

Extract from Kerryman.ie

Rescuers are searching for 28 miners trapped for more than a day in a coal mine after an explosion killed at least 19 people in China's deadliest mining accident in nearly a year.



Rescuers at Xiaojiawan Coal Mine after a gas explosion killed more than a dozen miners and trapped dozens more (AP Photo)

Police have detained the owners of the Xiaojiawan coal mine following Wednesday night's blast in coal-rich Panzhihua city in the south-western province of Sichuan, and checked for safety violations.

There were 154 miners working at the mine when it exploded, and 107 survivors have been pulled to the surface, the State Administration of Work Safety said in a statement.

Rescuers recovered the bodies of 16 miners who died from carbon monoxide poisoning, state-run Central China Television said. Three

other miners died at a hospital after being pulled to the surface, CCTV said. It did not give the cause of death for those miners.

It was the deadliest accident since 35 were killed in a blast at a mine in Yunnan province in November 2011.

The government agency said the rescue work is dangerous because of high underground temperatures, dense carbon monoxide, a lack of ventilation and narrow tunnel access.

The mine is owned by Zhengjin Industry and Trade Co. Ltd. and the owners were in police custody for investigation, the Panzhihua city government said in a statement posted on its official microblogging site.

Coal mine accidents are common in China, where work safety rules are often ignored. Last year, 1,973 miners were killed in coal mine accidents in the country, but that was down 19% from the previous year as authorities continue to beef up safety measures.

The State Administration of Work Safety said last week that it planned to close more than 600 small coal mines - considered more dangerous than larger mines - this year to further reduce fatalities.

With an annual output of 90,000 tons, Xiaojaiwan is considered a small mine.

Friday 31 August 2012

China mine blast death toll now 41

Extract from www.brecorder.com, Pakistan

BEIJING: The death toll from a gas explosion at a coal mine in China has risen to 41, making it the worst reported mining accident this year, but one more worker was pulled out alive Friday, authorities said.

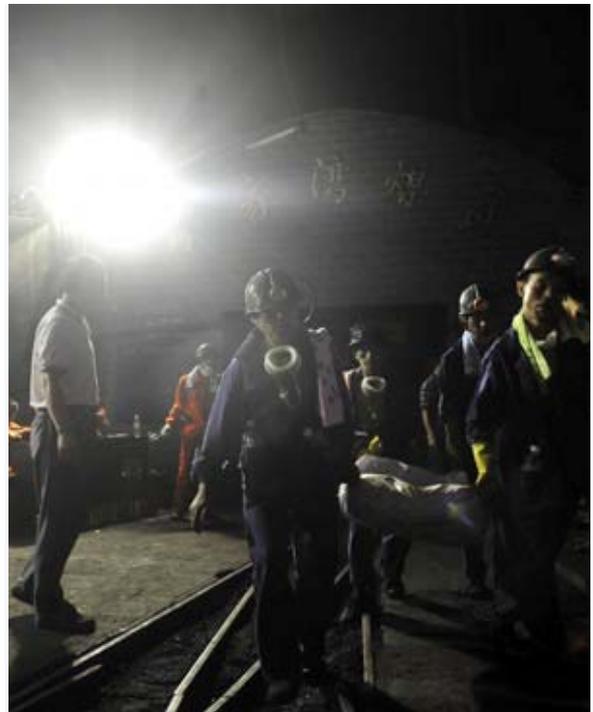
Five people remain trapped underground two days after the blast hit the Xiaojaiwan mine in southwest China's Sichuan province on late

Wednesday -- the latest in a string of fatal incidents for an industry known for poor safety.



Emergency crews have pulled out 38 bodies, while three other workers were rescued but later died of their injuries, the official Xinhua news agency said. Another 17 are being treated for serious injuries.

Rescue workers have struggled to access the area where the five miners are trapped, hampered by hot temperatures and high levels of poisonous carbon monoxide gas, the State Administration of Work Safety (SAWS) said on its website.



Rescuers work outside the Xiaojaiwan coal mine following Wednesday's explosion in Panzhihua city in the southwestern province of Sichuan. (AP Photo)

Fixing the ventilation system risked triggering a second explosion, it said, and the miners can only be reached by a narrow path.

The city government could not immediately be reached for comment, but a statement posted online confirmed that the death toll had risen to 41, up from 19 on Thursday.

It was the worst accident to hit China's notoriously dangerous coal mining industry since an explosion last November in a mine in southwestern Yunnan province killed 43 people.

Authorities ordered that mine shut and fined the company five million yuan (\$800,000), while 19 people were sent to face legal action, SWAS investigators said in a report this week.

They blamed the accident, estimated to have cost 40 million yuan (\$6 million) in economic losses, on illegal operation and inadequate safety policies.

China's mines are among the world's deadliest due to lax regulation, corruption and inefficiency. Accidents are common because safety is often neglected by bosses seeking quick profits.

The latest official figures show 1,973 people died in coal mining accidents in China in 2011, a 19 percent fall on the previous year.

Labour rights groups, however, say the actual death toll is likely to be much higher, partly due to under-reporting of accidents as mine bosses seek to limit their economic losses and avoid punishment.

It is not clear whether the five remaining trapped miners are still alive, but SWAS said more than 120 rescuers have been sent to the scene and emergency efforts continue.

Authorities have detained three mine owners and frozen the mine's accounts while they investigate the incident and have begun discussing compensation with the victims' families, the China Daily said.

China is the world's leading consumer of coal, relying on the fossil fuel for 70 percent of its growing energy needs

Mining dictionary

A guide to coal mining terminology

B

Bolt torque	The turning force in foot-pounds/megapascals applied to a roof bolt to achieve an installed tension.
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-Ed