



Mining Accident News No.1308

1 August to 31 August 2013

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Thursday 1 August 2013

USA: Man killed at Indiana County mining site identified

Extract from post-gazette.com, Pittsburgh, USA

Pennsylvania State Police and the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration are investigating a Latrobe man's death in Indiana County this morning as an industrial accident.

Steelyn Gary Kanouff, 26, was a mechanic for a mining company, Amerikohl Mining Inc., and working in a large truck at a strip-mining site in Brush Valley when he climbed atop one of its 7-foot-tall tires to examine what may have been a mechanical problem, state police Trooper John Matchik said.

Mr. Kanouff was trying to fix a leak on the front strut of a Caterpillar 773E rock truck, which gave out, the Indiana County coroner's office said in a press release.

At that point, about 7 a.m., he was crushed between the tire and the truck's frame.

He was pronounced dead at the scene at 7:18 a.m.

Mr. Kanouff died at the company's Onedia Mine site. An Amerikohl employee confirmed Mr. Kanouff worked at the company, but referred further comment to the owner, who was not immediately available.

U.S. Labor Department's MSHA releases mid-year mine fatality update

Extract from The Exponent Telegram, USA

ARLINGTON, Va. — The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration on Wednesday released a mid-year summary of mining deaths across the country. During the first half of 2013, 18 miners died in work-

NOTE: Views expressed in this newsletter are those of the individual sender, and are not associated with ANY organisation, individual or publication

related accidents at the nation's mines, one less than in the first half of 2012.

Nine each were killed in coal mining and metal and nonmetal mining accidents. Six coal miners died in less than 30 days – four of them in West Virginia – which led to increased actions by MSHA. In both coal and metal and nonmetal mining, one of the miners killed was a contractor.

Among the nine coal mining deaths, two miners died in machinery accidents, three in powered haulage accidents, and two in roof fall accidents. One miner died in an accident resulting from exploding vessels under pressure when he was struck by a hydraulic cylinder on a filter press, and one was killed in a hoisting accident.

In metal and nonmetal mining, one miner died in a fall of highwall, one was killed in a machinery accident, and one miner died in an accident involving explosives and breaking agents. Four miners were killed in powered haulage accidents and two miners in falling material accidents.

“The one recurring element in the fatalities we’ve seen this year is that they were preventable. The final numbers released by MSHA earlier this month showed that 2012 had the lowest mining death and injury rates in the history of U.S. mining,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “Many mines operate every shift of every day, year in and year out, without a fatality or a lost-time injury. Mining workplaces can and must be made safe for all miners.”

According to MSHA, fatalities can be prevented by using effective safety and health management programs in the workplace. Workplace examinations for hazards — pre-shift and on-shift every shift — can identify and eliminate hazards that kill and injure miners. Effective and appropriate training better positions miners to recognize and understand

hazards and find ways to control or eliminate them. Furthermore, miners must be free to exercise their rights under the Federal Mine Safety and Health Act of 1977 and be full participants in maintaining a safe and healthful workplace.

To review MSHA’s analysis of mining fatalities that occurred during the first half of 2013, along with best practices to help mining operations avoid similar fatalities, go to the agency’s website at <http://www.msha.gov/fatals/summaries/summaries.asp>

This information also has been provided directly to miners, mine operators and mine safety trainers.

Bulgaria's Energy Minister: Oranovo Mining Concession Should Have Been Stopped

Extract from novinite.com

Dragomir Stoynev, Bulgaria's Economy and Energy Minister, has vowed to remedy the important irregularities uncovered by the tragic accident at the Oranovo coal mine, which claimed at least two lives.

On July 16, a fatal collapse at the Oranovo mine killed 2 miners (Asen Stoynev, 41, and Hristo Mladenov, 45) and left 2 others (Ivan Lazarov, 35, and Nikolay Mihaylov, 42) trapped 450 meters below the surface underneath an avalanche of mud, rocks and water. The search for the two continues.

Speaking Thursday in the southwestern city of Simitli, where he arrived after another man died at work at the Oranovo mine, Stoynev accused the concessionaire of "a total failure to observe the rules", adding that the administrative staff had "criminally abdicated their supervisory duties."

Bulgaria's Economy and Energy Minister, as cited by the Focus news agency, explained that the concessionaire had operated without an approved work plan for 2013, adding that the administrative officials had been aware of

the fact but had nevertheless kept silent about it.

Stoynev also informed that no salaries had been paid at the mine for the second half of 2011 and the entire 2012, stressing that his predecessor and the administration should have taken steps to stop the concession until the workers were paid their dues.

No criminal charges brought in Chile mine cave-in that left 33 trapped

Extract from Global Post and The Republic

The prosecutor's office of the northern Chilean region of Atacama has decided not to bring any criminal charges in the case of a 2010 mine collapse that left 33 miners trapped far underground for nearly 70 days after a three-year investigation.

"There was no conviction to formulate any charges" against the mine owners or the regional heads of the National Geology and Mining Service, Atacama chief prosecutor Hector Mella Farias said.

Laurence Golborne, who as mining minister coordinated the rescue of the miners, slammed the decision as "incredible," while Socialist Sen. Isabel Allende said it was "painful" that no one would be held to account for the cave-in at the San Jose copper and gold mine, located near the northern Chilean city of Copiapo.

Golborne told Cooperativa radio that the mining service had instructed San Jose's owners to set up an second exit for emergency purposes, but did not subsequently enforce compliance with the order.

Had that alternate exit been installed, the miners "would not have been trapped for 70 days."

"It's difficult to accept that the (Atacama) prosecutor's office has not found anyone responsible," Sen. Allende said, recalling that

the miners had told her they could hear the mine "creaking and that they were somewhat afraid."

The cave-in occurred on Aug. 5, 2010, and attracted global attention when the 33 miners were discovered alive 17 days later.

An elaborate operation ensued that culminated on Oct. 12-13 of that year with the trapped men being lifted one by one out of the mine over a period of 25 hours, an event broadcast around the world.

The miners were brought to the surface in a Chilean navy-built capsule that was built for that purpose and lowered and raised through a specially drilled escape shaft measuring 50 centimeters (just under 20 inches) in diameter.

Other smaller boreholes were drilled and used to provide the trapped miners food, clothing and communications gear.

The Atacama prosecutor's office launched the investigation nearly three years ago to determine if there was any criminal responsibility for the accident.

The company that operated the mine reached a settlement with the Chilean government in the civil portion of the case, agreeing to pay \$5 million to cover the cost of the rescue operation.

"This is a disgrace to Chile's justice system," Mario Sepulveda, who became the public face of the miners, told The Associated Press.

"It's impossible that in an accident of this magnitude no one is held responsible," Sepulveda said. "Today, I want to dig a deep hole and bury myself again; only this time, I don't want anybody to find me."

The miners said it felt like an earthquake when the shaft caved in above them on Aug. 5, 2010, filling the lower parts of the copper and gold mine with dust. Hours passed before they could even begin to see a few steps in front of them. Tons of rock shifted constantly above, threatening to bury them forever.

People on the surface didn't know for more than two weeks that the men had survived, and the 33 miners stretched a meager 48-hour store of emergency food for 17 days, eating tiny capsules of tuna and sips of expired milk. A narrow shaft finally was drilled into their haven and the world learned they were alive.

That shaft allowed food and water to reach the men while rescuers drilled a bigger escape hole. Finally, in an operation that ended in the early hours of Oct. 13, the miners were hauled up one by one in a cage through 2,000 feet (600 meters) of rock.

Renato Prenafeta, a lawyer for 31 of the 33 miners, said his legal team will review the background that led to the prosecutor's decision and present its own arguments. Prenafeta has also filed a civil suit asking for compensation for the harm and damage suffered by the miners over the past three years.

"Most of the people I represent are still suffering from serious psychological consequences," Prenafeta said. "Many can't even work. It's a very dramatic situation."

The miners received a hero's welcome after their globally televised rescue. They received paid trips to the Greek Islands, visited the Real Madrid stadium in Spain and paraded at Magic Kingdom in Disney World.

But their fantasy began to crumble on their return home.

Many ran out of money and had to scratch out a living in the dusty working class neighborhoods of the desert city of Copiapo. Some began suffering from health and psychological problems. Others took to alcohol and drugs.

"I'm upset by this decision," said Omar Reygadas, one of the rescued miners who is now unemployed.

"Most mine owners are afraid to hire us because they think that if there's ever a

problem everyone will immediately find out about it since we get a lot press. We're well known."

A Chilean congressional commission in 2011 found the owners of the 125-year-old mine responsible for the cave-in.

Mining-related deaths in Chile fell 36 percent in 2011 to 27, compared to 41 in 2010, the year of the cave-in, according to a report by the Mining Ministry. The report says that thanks to increased oversight by inspectors, accidents at the country's 8,500 mines also fell by 40 percent in 2011, the lowest level in 21 years.

Friday 2 August 2013

Two people killed at Geita Gold Mine pit

Extract from IPPmedia.com

Two people died in an accident at Geita Gold Mining Limited's (GGM) Nyankanga Pit Cut 2 following a substantial plane failure caused by of illegal mining activities.

The Geita District Authorities and Geita Gold Mining Limited (GGM) confirmed the death of two individuals in the accident on Tuesday.

Speaking at the scene, Geita District commissioner Manzie Mangochie said: "Surrounding communities need to join hands in these efforts and stop illegal mining activities by forming Sungusungu (community police) who will identify individuals who are committing this crime." He added: "What is happening now is trespassing and stealing from lease areas. This is illegal, dangerous and fatal."

A statement availed to The Guardian yesterday said that at approximately 18h30 on Tuesday, GGM's Rapid Response Unit was informed by community members of an accident at Nyankanga Pit Cut 2 - a substantial plane failure had taken place as a result of illegal mining activities in the pit.

It said the police were called to the site and a joint effort to rescue the two individuals trapped under the debris followed.

One person was seriously injured and was rushed to the Geita District hospital, but was pronounced dead on Wednesday.

Efforts to rescue the second individual continued overnight with GGM's rescue team supporting the police by providing light and lifter bags, as well as using tools to move massive rocks to assist in the rescue effort.

The operation continued until 10h00 on Wednesday morning when the body of the second person was recovered and identified as a resident of Nyankumbu village. The police have transferred the body of the deceased to Geita District Hospital.

Geita Resident mines officer Ally Said said: "The law requires anyone interested to do mining business must obtain a license. Youths need to form groups and come to our offices for more information and procedures which can help them get engaged legally in the business in other identified areas."

This week in mining accident history

2 August 1895

Auchenharvie Mine

Stevenston, Ayrshire in Scotland, UK

Underground coal mine

Inrush of water

9 killed

The colliery was the property of the Glengarnock Iron and Steel Company. Limited with Mr. R. Main as agent and Mr. John Marshall as the manager. There were two shafts at the colliery Nos. 1 and 4 which were sunk to the Main Coal, No. 1 at 75 fathoms and No.4 at 73 fathoms. The rise workings extended for 600 yards to the north of the No.4 Pit. They were reached by two self-acting inclines or 'cousies'. The first of these extended from the to pit bottom for about 230

yards at an inclination of one in six and the second, 330 yards at an inclination of one in nine. The second was made in the strata above the coal with twelve feet of solid strata between it and the waste workings underneath. The dook which led to the dip workings extended to the south of the shaft for about 750 yards and dipped at one in six in the upper part and one in eight in the lower part. The colliery was bounded on the east side by a well known whin dyke or 'gaw' called the Capon Graig Gaw which formed the boundary between the Auchenharvie Colliery and the abandoned workings of the Stevenson Colliery. This 'gaw' was supposed never to have been cut from either side and the mineral tenants on both sides were prohibited by their leases from penetrating it, even so there was serious outburst of water from the old workings which claimed the lives of nine men.

At about 3 p.m. on the 2nd. August an outburst of water suddenly took place in the working place of a miner, William Jackson, who, with his two sons, worked in the extreme rise of the pit. It rushed in with great velocity and force down the drawing roads and the inclines to the shaft and from there down the dook. All the people employed in the rise workings succeeded in escaping down the cousies to the No.4 Pit or by another rout to the No. 1 Pit with the exception of five, One boy, John McGhee, worked at the top of the cousie appeared to have run past the No.4 Pit bottom and down the dook. At the time it was believed that was where his body was located. The men workings in the dook workings all escaped with the exception of eight.

Efforts were, made to locate the missing men but for a long time, the rush of water prevented access either down the dook or up the cousies from the No. 1 Pit or by the communication roads from the No. 1 Pit. By midnight the rush of water had abated and several explorers were able to get to a point in the cousie where they met an impenetrable blockage which evidently dammed back a large volume of

water. As it was dangerous to attempt to clear this, dynamite charges with long fuses were set. Two shots were fired without any visible effect.

By noon of the 3rd. August the water behind the dam was pined off and relays of men started to redd their way through the obstruction. They found that it had been caused by a race of hutches round which stones and silt had collected. By 11 a.m. on the 4th. the barrier was penetrated for 30 yards without any signs of the top being reached when the knocking of imprisoned men was heard, About 1 p.m. a passage was made and five men crawled through. Renewed efforts were made to find any of the men missing in the dook but after every accessible place had been searched, all hope of them being alive was abandoned.

Those who died were:-

John Clauchan aged 35 years, miner.

William Glauchan aged years, miner.

James Clauchan aged 21-years, miner.

Henry Clauchan aged 18 years, miner.

Duncan Gallacher-aged 31 years, miner.

James Mullen aged 19 years, miner.

Peter Mullen aged 14 years, miner.

Robert McConn aged 18 years, miner.

John McGhee aged 14 years, cousie attendant.

On the 5th. August, Mr. Mottram, the Inspector, arrived at the colliery and with the manager and Mr. Ronaldson managed to reach the point where the water broke in. they did this with great difficulty and found an opening ten feet wide and four feet high into an old stoop and room workings but owing to a fall of roof, they were unable to go any further.

On the cast side of the Capon Graig Gaw, abut 800 yards from this point there was an old pit called Deep Shank, sunk 30 fathoms to the Main Coal. Before the accident, water frequently ran from the mouth of this shaft but after the disaster the level began to sink until it

was down eleven and half fathoms from the surface. Several fresh 'sits' of the surface close to the shaft took pace shortly after the outburst occurred.

This was taken as conclusive proof that the Capon Graig Gaw must have been breached some time in the past. The gaw had never been laid bare on the west side and it was improbable that a large volume of water could cross it through natural fissures. There was an old pit near by but there was nothing on the surface to indicate its presence. An old surface plan showed the existence of shaft but did not indicate its depth. Another old pit was opened by the manager three years before. This was found to be fifteen fathoms deep to the Ladyha' scam and was free from water. No one seemed to have had the slightest suspicion that there were any old workings near the point where the water broke out.

Sunday 4 August 2013

Chilean miners to appeal closure of accident probe

Extract from www.globalpost.com, USA

The 33 Chilean miners who captivated the world after being trapped underground for 69 days said Friday they will appeal a decision to close an investigation into the incident without charges.

The case was closed this week after no evidence of criminal liability was found concerning the owners of the San Jose mine, three years after the miners were trapped under the earth for more than two months.

"We are not fighting for money, but for the precedent (it sets)," Luis Urzua, the group's shift chief, told reporters.

Authorities had investigated the August 5, 2010 collapse that buried the miners for 69 days at approximately 700 meters (2,290 feet) underground in Chile's Atacama region.

But Atacama prosecutor Hector Mella told reporters on Wednesday that the probe was over "because we don't believe we can bring charges over these events."

He told radio Cooperativa that there is no certainty over what caused the mine's collapse.

"These jerks have buried me a second time. I'm not well. I've been crying all morning," Mario Sepulveda, one of the other survivors, told AFP.

The miners have filed a civil lawsuit accusing the National Service of Geology and Mining of negligence and demanding \$500,000 in damages for each miner. The suit says the state agency had failed to inspect working conditions and mine safety.

The San Jose gold and copper mine, which had been in operation for more than a century, remains semi-abandoned.

Monday 5 August 2013

MSHA: Fewer roof falls being reported in U.S. mines

Extract from wymt tv, USA

WASHINGTON D.C. (WYMT/MSHA) - ARLINGTON, Va. - The number of U.S. miners killed in underground coal roof falls has been dramatically reduced since 2007, and fatalities resulting from retreat mining have been virtually eliminated, according to figures from the Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration.

"As a result of efforts undertaken by MSHA and the mining community, we have seen a significant reduction in coal mine roof fall accidents, which have traditionally been a leading source of debilitating injuries and death for coal miners," said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health

Each year during its Preventive Roof/Rib Outreach Program (PROP), MSHA educates

miners and mine operators about the dangers of roof and rib falls in underground coal mines. From 2003-2007, 28 miners lost their lives in accidents involving falls of the mine's roof and ribs. Over the next five years, from 2008 through 2012, the number of roof and rib fall fatalities dropped to 19, a 32 percent reduction. More significantly, the number of fatalities resulting from retreat mining fell from seven during the first five-year period to zero for the 2008-2012 period.

Retreat mining is the practice of mining coal and leaving pillars standing to support the mine roof. When mining is completed in that area, miners carefully collapse and remove the pillars as the work then retreats from that section of the underground mine.

"Everyone in this industry - miners and their representatives, mine operators as well as MSHA personnel - have worked together to make mines safer and more secure from roof falls," said Main. "However, while we have made real gains in eliminating fatalities from retreat mining, we must redouble our efforts to address hazards in other areas of underground roof and rib safety."

In 2012, 377 miners were injured from roof and rib falls. Of these, 145 were roof-bolter operators injured from roof falls, and another 20 were roof-bolter operators injured from falls of rib.

With this in mind, MSHA's 2013 PROP effort will focus on Roof Bolter Operator Safety. Through the release of a four-part series of informational posters, the agency will target roof-bolter roof and rib fall injuries, as well as other accidents from hands-on drilling, pinch points and accidental control activation.

Tuesday 6 August 2013

2 dead, 6 missing after China colliery blast

Extract from Xinhua

Two miners have been confirmed dead, and six others remain trapped on Tuesday after a gas blast hit an illegal coal mine in southwest China's Yunnan Province on Monday, rescuers said.

They pulled two bodies out on Monday afternoon, but said the rescue was progressing slowly due to difficulties in clearing the blockage that resulted from the blast-triggered cave-in.

Eight workers were estimated to be trapped following the accident that occurred at 3:40 p.m. on Monday at the mine in Qingmen Village, Zhaoyang District of Zhaotong City, according to the district government.

Police said they had detained the mine's owner.

Coal mine flooding kills five in China

Extract from Xinhua

Five miners were found dead in a flooded coal mine in north China's Shanxi Province, rescuers said Tuesday.

The miners were trapped when about 100,000 cubic meters of underground water flooded the pit of a mine operated by Guzhou Weifeng Mining Co., Ltd. in Pingding County at around 7 p.m. on July 31, according to the rescue headquarters.

Of the 76 miners working at the time of the accident, 71 escaped. Rescuers drilled tunnels into the underground shaft to pump water out.

The licensed state-owned mining company has a designed annual production capacity of 600,000 tonnes.

USA: Miner Killed at New York Limestone Mine

Extract kindly provided by Sharpe Media, LLC

A miner has been killed in an accident at an aggregate mine in northwestern New York State.

The accident Aug. 5 claimed the life of Willard Moser, 55 of Deer River, according to Lewis County Undersheriff Jim Monnat. The accident at 2:07 p.m. occurred as Moser looked into a crusher where the tooth of an excavator had become lodged. The tooth dislodged suddenly, striking Moser in the head, Monnat said.

The victim was pronounced dead at the scene by the county deputy coroner.

The accident occurred at the MJL Crushing, LLC surface limestone mine of the same name located along state route 26 in Lowville.

According to MSHA's mine data retrieval system (MDRS), the three-person mine has been in operation since 2008. A non-fatal days lost accident occurred the following year when a supervisor was struck in the face by a stone from a screen box. MSHA has inspected the mine seven times since 2008, written 13 citations and issued \$1,471 in fines, all paid. The last MSHA inspection occurred in October 2012.

The fatality is the 10th in the Metal/Non-Metal (M/NM) sector so far this year. Four of the fatalities have been in the aggregate sector. An additional 11 coal miners have died on the job in 2013. At this time a year ago, 10 miners had died in M/NM mines and 13 at Coal operations.

Wednesday 7 August 2013

S. Africa: Fatal accident at Bokoni Mine

Extract from Junior Mining Network.com

JOHANNESBURG, - Atlatsa Resources Corporation announces with deep regret that a contract miner was fatally injured in a fall of ground accident at the Company's Bokoni Platinum Mine Vertical Shaft yesterday, Tuesday, 6 August 2013.

The South African Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) has completed its inspection and issued a section 54 safety stoppage notice at Bokoni's Vertical Shaft operation. Further updates will be provided to the market in due course.

The board of directors and management of the Company and Bokoni Platinum Mines extend their condolences to both the family and colleagues of the deceased contractor.

This fatality comes at a time when Bokoni's safety record has been steadily improving over the past 15 months with two million fatality free shifts achieved on 3 August, 2013.

Thursday 8 August 2013

USA: One died, two injured in Harlan County Mining Accident

Extract from WSAZ3, USA

HOLMES MILL, Ky. (WSAZ) – Mining officials in Kentucky tell our sister station WYMT, they are on the scene of a mining accident in Harlan County.

It happened about noon on Tuesday at the Lone Mountain Processing mine near Holmes Mill.

Three people were reportedly injured and were taken to the hospital.

Officials with the Office of Mine Safety and Licensing say one miner was killed, two others were injured.

Preliminary reports indicate a continuous miner machine was being used on a coal pillar. The pillar burst, trapping the miners.

The miners' names have not been released.

UPDATE

HARLAN, Ky. - Kentucky officials say a coal miner has been killed and two more injured in an underground eastern Kentucky mine.

The Kentucky Office of Mine Safety and Licensing says the incident was reported around noon Tuesday at the mine near Holmes Mill on Black Mountain in Harlan County

The agency says the miners were working with a mining machine and became trapped when a wall apparently collapsed.

The collapse killed 56-year-old Lenny D. Gilliam of Appalachia, Va.

The injured workers were taken to a hospital, but their conditions were not known.

The mine is operated by Lone Mountain Processing, a subsidiary of St. Louis-based Arch Coal.

It was the second mining-related fatality in Kentucky this year.

Upper Big Branch Mine Disaster Victims Say They're Still Owed \$1.5 Million Each

Extract from Huff Post Green, USA

MORGANTOWN, W.Va. — Relatives of three of the 29 men killed in the Upper Big Branch mine disaster say Alpha Natural Resources has yet to pay them each \$1.5 million as promised under a settlement with the federal government.

A recent lawsuit in U.S. District Court in Beckley also claims that at least eight other

families are still awaiting payments. It asks Judge Irene Berger to enforce the terms of the landmark \$210 million agreement with the U.S. Department of Justice and ensure that all families receive the restitution that Virginia-based Alpha had publicly promised.

But Alpha said Wednesday it has "fully complied" with the deal, including payments to various victims' families, "and these three plaintiffs are not due any additional payments."

This is the second time the three families have sued with claims they're entitled to more money, said spokesman Ted Pile.

"Their original lawsuit was dismissed, without prejudice, by a U.S. District Court judge this past May," he said. "So the plaintiffs' lawyers decided to file a new complaint asking for additional compensation once again. Alpha believes the new complaint continues to lack merit and we fully intend to defend this matter again."

Alpha bought Massey Energy Co. and its mines, including Upper Big Branch, after the explosion there in April 2010.

The complaint was filed by three estate administrators: Jeffrey Skeens, who lost his father, Grover Skeens, in the blast; Carolyn Davis, the widow of Charles Davis; and Owen Davis, who lost his son Cory.

The complaint says all three families agreed to confidential settlements of wrongful death lawsuits with Massey before the company was sold. But Alpha was not party to those deals, and the families say they never gave up their rights to additional restitution.

The historic federal settlement had multiple components, including a promise to pay \$46.5 million in restitution to the families of the 29 victims and two other miners who were severely injured. The Davis and Skeens families called that "a voluntary act" by Alpha.

"Nowhere in the non-prosecution agreement does it state that because the defendants had

settled wrongful death claims ... that no additional restitution would be paid," the complaint says.

The families also say they were not party to discussions about the DOJ settlement and never agreed to give up their rights to "have those responsible for the death to be prosecuted for said crimes or criminal activities."

No hearing dates have been scheduled.

Upper Big Branch was the worst U.S. coal mining disaster in 40 years.

Four investigations found that worn and broken cutting equipment created a spark that ignited accumulations of coal dust and methane gas. Broken and clogged water sprayers allowed what should have been a minor flare-up to become an inferno.

The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration said the root cause was Massey's "systematic, intentional and aggressive efforts" to conceal life-threatening problems. Managers even maintained two sets of pre-shift inspection books — an accurate one for themselves, and a sanitized one for regulators.

Former superintendent Gary May and security chief Hughie Elbert Stover are behind bars for their actions at the mine.

A former president of another Massey subsidiary, meanwhile, is awaiting sentencing for conspiracy.

David Hughart is cooperating with prosecutors and has testified that other Massey operations gave miners underground warnings that inspectors were onsite. He's set to appear before Berger on Sept. 10.

Friday 9 August 2013

Peru: Trevali Mining reports Accident at Santander Mine

Extract from silverinvesting news.com

Trevali Mining Corporation has been informed by its mining contractor that a fatality and injury has occurred at its Santander Mine in Peru. All underground preparation and development activities have been suspended, and senior management is onsite to work with government authorities in thoroughly investigating the accident.

As quoted in the press release:

On August 8th a fatal accident claimed the life of one miner and injured another, both working for the Company's mine contractor in the Magistral South zone of the mine. Upon knowledge of the tragic accident, all underground preparation and development activities except emergency requirements were suspended immediately and authorities notified.

Senior operations management is onsite and along with our contract mining team will work with Government authorities to thoroughly investigate the accident.

The Company is also working closely with its contractor to ensure that the miners' families receive all possible support. Additionally, counseling is being provided for our employees and workers on site.

Trevali Mining Corporation President and CEO, Dr. Mark Cruise, said:

We are all greatly saddened by this tragic accident that resulted in the death of one miner and injury of another and extend our sincere condolences to their families, friends and colleagues. Safety has always been a top priority for the Company and we will ensure this accident is fully investigated.

Trevali Mining Corporation is in the final stages of construction at its Santander zinc/lead/silver mine in west-central Peru.

Sunday 11 August 2013

India: Odisha coal mine accident toll mounts to 14

Extract from the Times of India

BHUBANESWAR/ROURKELA: The death toll in coal dump crash at an open cast site of Mahanadi Coalfields Limited (MCL) in Odisha's Sundargarh district mounted to 14 with the recovery of four more bodies as search and rescue operation resumed on Sunday.

"Four more bodies were recovered from the mishap site at Kulda open cast Basundhara-Garjanbahal coal mine area after search and rescue operation resumed this morning," a spokesman of MCL said.

With this the death toll in yesterday's mishap which stood at ten last night rose to 14, he said adding that the operation was still under way and the possibility of the toll mounting further cannot be ruled out.

The five persons who were rescued from the heap with injuries are undergoing treatment at a hospital.

A senior police official, who was at the spot during the rescue operation, did not rule out increase in the number of casualties as some more people were suspected to be trapped under the debris.

The incident took place when some people from nearby villages were collecting coal from the overburdened dump yard located near the mining area, the spokesman said.

Some of them were buried when a portion of the coal dump suddenly collapsed, probably due to heavy rains that lashed the area on Friday, he said, adding search and rescue operation was immediately launched at the site.

Chief minister Naveen Patnaik has ordered a probe into the incident by the local Revenue Divisional Commissioner.

The MCL and the Odisha government have separately announced ex-gratia of Rs 3 lakh and Rs 2 lakh respectively to the next of kin of the dead.

The MCL also sanctioned Rs 10,000 each for the victim's family members for the funeral. It was also providing the medical expenditure for the injured, the spokesman said.

Many residents of the area often scour for coal in the dump yard.

Entry of people to this area, located outside the mining zone, was illegal and there were notice boards warning about it, the MCL spokesman added

USA: Investigation continues into deadly mine accident

Extract from WKYT.com

State and federal investigators returned to the site of a deadly mine accident in Harlan County to figure out what happened.

State officials said that a coal pillar burst in the Huff Creek mine. Mr Lenny Gilliam of Appalachia, Virginia died. Two others are injured.

Mr Dick Brown spokesperson for the Kentucky Energy and Environment Cabinet said that "They also went underground continuing to look at the site of the accident to help them determine what may have happened so that they can move forward."

State officials said that of the two injured, Johnny Nantz of Wallins is out of the hospital. Terry Scott of Pennington Gap, Virginia is in the hospital with non-life threatening injuries.

State mining officials said that the accident inside the Huff Creek mine near Holmes Mill killed 56 year old Mr Lenny Gilliam and injured Mr Terry Scott and Mr Johnny Nantz.

Arch Coal officials said that 56 year old Mr Lenny Gilliam has worked for Lone Mountain Processing for 17 years. Tuesday he went to work in the Huff Creek mine near Holmes Mill but did not make it home.

Mr Dick Brown with the Energy and Environment Cabinet said that "Coal in that pillar blew out and fell on the miners as they were operating the continuous mining machine in that area."

Officials with the Kentucky Office of Mine Safety and Licensing said that the investigation to determine happened is just getting started. They say investigators will go back into the mine soon.

Mr Brown went on to say investigators will go looking around, investigating what may have taken place. They'll be interviewing other miners who may have been in or near the accident site when it happened, and of course, at some point talking to the two miners who did survive.

The president of Lone Mountain said that they will cooperate with the investigation to determine what caused the accident. The company released a statement today saying their deepest sympathies go out to Lenny's wife, children, extended family, friends and co workers.

Monday 12 August 2013

30 evacuated during fire at Sweden's oldest mine

Extract from New Zealand Herald

An official says a fire in Sweden's oldest mine has forced the evacuation of 30 workers.

Rescue services spokesman Lars Westerfors says the fire broke out Sunday about 800 meters (2,625 feet) underground at the Garpenberg ore mine, east of the city of Borlange in central Sweden.

He says the blaze trapped four miners in a safety chamber, but they were rescued by

firefighters. The other 26 miners were quickly evacuated from another location. The fire was then put out.

Marcela Sylvander, spokeswoman of the company Boliden that owns the mine, said no one was injured.

It was unclear what caused the fire or when the mining of zinc, copper, lead, gold and silver can resume at Garpenberg, which dates back to the 13th century.

Tuesday 13 August 2013

USA: Miners Trapped In Salt Mine

Extract from NewNet5.com

GRAND RIVER, Ohio - Several miners were trapped Thursday in the Morton Salt Mine in Grand River when the power went out, but they are now safe.

According to NewsChannel5, the miners were about a mile and a half inside the mine. When the power went out, the elevators stopped working.

The miners were trapped for about four to five hours. They did get out about 10 p.m.

One man's wife said that the men did have enough oxygen. She just wanted her husband out safely.

"God, make sure he gets through this OK, that's all I was worried about. Just get him out OK," said Andrea.

All the men are safe.

Thursday 15 August 2013

Kiwi killed in West Australian mine accident

Extract from stuff.co.nz

A New Zealand electrician killed in a West Australia mine was so safety-conscious his death has stunned his former boss.

Aucklander Kurt Williams, 24, was crushed carrying out maintenance work on a large motor in the crushing plant at Fortescue Metals Group's Christmas Creek operation in the Pilbara region.

Employed by Fortescue's contractor, Crushing Services International (CSI), he had gone to Australia in search of the big pay packets, Barry Martin of Auckland firm Prolectrics told Fairfax Media.

Williams worked for him for four years until setting out for the mines early last year.

An electrician could earn more than A\$100,000 (NZ\$113,000) in the West Australian mines, Martin said.

Williams started out as an apprentice with the Mt Wellington firm, and did so well he was offered a job.

He was not one to take risks, Martin said.

"It's a tragedy ... just a good person, that's all. A good bloke," Martin said.

"He was very aware, not a dummy. He was quite a switched-on guy, I struggle to see how this has happened."

Williams had played rugby league for the Ellerslie Eagles and lived in Howick in east Auckland. He attended Pakuranga College, his Facebook page said.

Martin had been busy on the phone since the news broke as Williams had been very popular, and a lot of his clients had been concerned.

"I've rung a lot of people because he had been in contact with a lot of people we worked with," he said.

"He'd be one of the last people you'd think this would happen to."

Martin understood the dead man's mother and stepfather had been on a cruise headed for Australia.

Electrical Trades Union WA secretary Les McLaughlan said the union had previously raised general concerns about CSI's safety practices and specific concerns about the kind of work Williams was undertaking.

"This man's death is a tragedy and we believe it may have been prevented if CSI had listened to our concerns about its safety practices," he said.

"Working on live equipment is inherently dangerous. What we need to know is whether the company took any extra safety precautions after we raised these concerns."

The incident also highlighted the danger of people working alone at night, McLaughlan said.

Australian Resources Minister Gary Gray said the death was sad and unfortunate.

"We went nearly two years without a mine-site death the longest period in the mining history of Western Australia," he told a mining conference in Perth. "Our industry will feel grief and sadness for the family."

Fortescue has offered chaplaincy and counselling services for Williams' family and colleagues.

The company's operations director, David Woodall, said staff were deeply saddened by the incident.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the worker's loved ones at this time," Woodall said in a statement to the Australian Securities Exchange.

Mining and processing at Christmas Creek was suspended overnight.

The last WA mine fatality occurred on August 16, 2011, when Brent David Glew was killed doing maintenance on a hydraulic cylinder on a front-end loader at Rio Tinto's Brockman 2 site near Tom Price.

Vietnam: Man dies in mine accident

Extract from Vietnam.net

VietNamNet Bridge – A miner was killed and another injured on Wednesday, Aug 14, when a water pipe broke causing a cave-in at a coal mining site run by Mao Khe Coal Co. Ltd in northern Quang Ninh Province.

The dead man was swept away by water and buried under soil and rubble. He has been identified as 44-year-old Pham Phu Tien. His body was found an hour after the accident.

The injured man, Ngo Doan Dang, was quickly recovered from the collapsed mine shaft.

He was given first aid by rescuers from the company. His condition is said to be satisfactory.

The case is under further investigation.

Friday 16 August 2013

USA: One dead, one hurt in coal mine accident

Extract from Gillette News Record

An employee at Arch Coal's Black Thunder mine was killed and a second one was hospitalized after an accident at the mine at about 1:30 a.m. Friday.

Jacob Dowdy, 24, of Upton was pronounced dead at the scene. The injured man, 38-year-old Mike Lewis of Wright, was taken to Campbell County Memorial Hospital, according to Campbell County Sheriff Bill Pownall.

Lewis is in good condition at the hospital.

A power shovel was traveling up a ramp and rolled back, striking two pickup trucks which the two employees were driving.

"One miner in the truck was killed, with another trapped in the truck. The second miner was taken to the hospital, but apparently not seriously injured," said Amy Louviere,

spokeswoman for Mine Safety and Health Administration.

Dowdy had been an employee of Thunder Basin Coal Co., Arch Coal's subsidiary that operates the mine, for about three years.

"We wish to extend our deepest sympathies to Mr. Dowdy's family, friends and coworkers at this most difficult time," said Keith Williams, president of Thunder Basin Coal. "We are profoundly saddened by the loss. The safety of our team members remains our No. 1 priority."

Pownall said the accident scene was turned over to MSHA after it arrived on the scene because county investigators found no criminal activity.

MSHA has just begun the investigation, Louviere said, adding that it's too early to know if weather was a factor.

Louviere said she wasn't aware of any other reports of accidents or disruptions from other coal mines in Campbell County.

"The mine section is under a closure order at this time while the investigation begins," she said.

The mine employed 1,574 people at the end of second quarter, according to MSHA.

Black Thunder mine produced 92.9 million tons of coal in 2012 and 48.5 million tons through June.

India: Death toll rises to 11 in Odisha coal mine mishap

Extract from Hindustan Times

The death toll climbed to 11 in the coal mine accident that took place six days ago in Odisha's Sundergarh district as local authorities confirmed one more death on Friday.

"The mutilated body of a woman was retrieved from the debris on Thursday. The death toll

now stands at 11," said district superintendent of police Sanjeev Arora.

A man and a woman are still feared to be trapped under the debris and efforts are on to locate them, said Arora.

He added that sniffer dogs attached to the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) were also being used in the rescue operation.

The accident occurred on August 10 at the dumping yard of state-run Mahanadi Coalfields Limited in Basundhara mining area of Kulda in Sundergarh district, 450km from Bhubaneswar.

A group of villagers were allegedly collecting coal shells from a pile of coal overburden that collapsed on them.

Overburden is the name given to the material above the coal reserve, which is removed before mining and dumped elsewhere.

Since that waste also contains low-grade coal shells, people often sneak into the prohibited mining zone area to collect these from the dumps.

Quote of the week

"The third-rate mind is only happy when it is thinking with the majority. The second-rate mind is only happy when it is thinking with the minority. The first-rate mind is only happy when it is thinking."

A. A. Milne

English juvenile author (1882-1956)

Wednesday 21 August 2013

WA: Mine management firm fined \$100K over char plant blast

Extract from ABC News Online, Aus

The Department of Mines and Petroleum has welcomed a fine handed down to a mine management company after an explosion at a south-west Western Australian char plant.

An electrical contractor was working at Griffin Coal's Ewington Trial Char Plant near Collie when high oxygen levels led to an explosion in October 2008.

The contractor suffered severe burns to his head and upper body.

The plant was being operated by Carpenter Mine Management, which was fined \$100,000 in the Bunbury Magistrates Court yesterday.

The department's Simon Ridge says safety inspectors check procedures at WA's 2,400 mine sites every year.

"They're there to help the mines to achieve better safety outcomes, it really is a cooperative endeavour and we need to work together to get the aspiration of zero harm," he said.

Mr Ridge says it was a fair outcome.

"While certainly most companies operate to high standards but we always improve, that's why Government and industry need to work together," he said.

"The essence of it is where people are failing to work safely or to follow procedures, then they need to be held to account."

Thursday 22 August 2013

USA: Mine Safety Official Says Fatality-Free Year Achievable

Extract from WKMS

It's never happened, but a leading official in the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration believes a fatality-free year in coal mining is achievable.

Joe Main, who the Assistant Secretary of Labor for the Mine Safety and Health Administration was in Lexington for the Central Appalachian Regional Work Safety and Health Symposium. Just forty years ago, before the U-S Mine Safety Act, Main says a miner was killed every day. Last year, he says, 36

American miners died with 20 of them claimed by coal.

"And for those who say we can't have fatal free industry, I'll say this. The folks sitting in these rooms in 1977 was looking at the number of deaths to get to zero, starting at 273. The distance we have to go is far less than what they had to go," Main said.

So far this year, there have been 23 mining deaths with 13 in the coal industry. Kentucky has had two mining-related fatalities. The federal official says equal enforcement of mine safety regulations can help reduce mining fatalities. Main says consistent enforcement of safety rules is critical.

"When I arrived at MSHA, there was a number of complaints about consistency of our enforcement and one of the things that we did fairly quickly was to implement a new training program for field office supervisors," Main said. "And for folks that work in the coal mines, you understand one thing when I say this, our field office supervisors is the same as a section boss in getting things done."

Main says they are improving mine safety. Over the past two years, the federal regulator says there's been an 18-percent improvement in compliance with government rules.

Sunday 25 August 2013

W.Va. stalls rule on mine 'proximity detection' safety rule

Extract from Charleston Gazette, USA

West Virginia officials have never acted on a five-year-old recommendation to adopt a rule that could end one of the most common type of coal-mining accidents: being crushed by a piece of underground equipment.

In September 2008, a team of state Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training inspectors recommended the state require all underground mine operators to install

"proximity detection" systems to shut off mining equipment when it gets too close to workers.

Officials have never adopted such a rule. Some mine operators are adding the systems on their own. State inspectors sometimes mandate proximity detection equipment as an additional safety measure -- but only after miners are killed.

"It's a shame we have to wait until we have a fatality," said state mine safety director Eugene White, "but that's the only avenue we have to require them."

Between 1984 and 2010, 30 miners died and 220 were injured nationwide when they became crushed, pinned or struck by continuous mining machines underground. Mine safety experts say these deaths and injuries could be prevented if mine operators installed proximity detection devices.

On the federal level, two separate U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration rules to require proximity detection systems remain stalled, one at MSHA and the other at the White House.

MSHA chief Joe Main has touted the fact that some mine operators -- led by CONSOL Energy and Alliance Coal -- are installing proximity detectors without a legal mandate to do so. But the voluntary measures cover only about one-fourth of the continuous mining machines in use around the country, according to MSHA.

In West Virginia, state mine safety officials at one point planned to move to require proximity detection systems ahead of any federal mandate.

Back in June 2008, the state's Mine Safety Technology Task Force planned to have a draft regulation ready by January 2009 so it could become effective by June 2009, according to meeting minutes and other records obtained under the Freedom of Information Act.

"The task force would like to come up with a regulation before federal requirements are proposed on proximity devices," said the minutes, from a June 18-19 meeting in Charleston.

Three months later, in a Sept. 7, 2008, memo, four top state mine inspectors recommended specific language that would have given mine operators a year to install proximity detection systems.

"It is our belief that the use of a device, such as the proximity warning system, will be necessary if we are to ever eliminate injuries of this type," the memo said.

While questions remained about such equipment, the memo said, a legal mandate would push industry and academia to improve the technology to respond to a new market.

"The committee is aware that, although there are devices available on the market today, that work is still necessary in order to have a workable solution to this issue," the memo said. "However, it is also the belief of this committee that mandating this device through regulation will bring forth greater efforts in research and development when a known market is available."

The task force, charged with reviewing new mining technologies and recommending them to state regulators and the industry, never issued a formal recommendation on proximity device requirements.

White noted that the panel, made up of industry and labor members, has continued to discuss the issue, visit mines that are using the devices, and evaluate the various technologies on the market.

Earlier this year, at an April meeting in Flatwoods, the task force asked its administrator, Joel Watts, to draw up a new draft of a proximity detection systems rule. Watts did so, but the task force has never voted to recommend the rule to the mine

safety office or the state's Board of Coal Mine Health and Safety.

Last week, the issue came up again when the mine safety board's members heard a report on the Feb. 19 death of John Myles at Metinvest's Affinity Mine in Raleigh County. Myles, 44, of Hilltop, was hit by a mining "scoop" vehicle as he worked shoveling coal debris away from the mine walls at the underground operation.

In a previous report, MSHA had concluded one cause of the accident was that the scoop "was allowed to operate with supplies and other extraneous materials positioned on top of the machine," which "caused limited visibility" for the miner operating the vehicle.

State investigators disagreed, saying that the scoop's batteries alone were so tall that they blocked the driver's view, regardless of whether supplies were piled on top of it.

Both MSHA and the state took steps that now require the company to use either proximity detection devices or cameras to avoid future such accidents.

McKennis Browning, an inspector at large for the state mine safety office, told board members that proximity detection systems or cameras might have prevented Myles being killed. A requirement for workers to wear highly visible strobe lights in underground mines might also have helped, Browning told the board last week.

But Browning said that, without a rule on those issues, state inspectors are only able to step in and require such equipment as a mine operator's response to a death or serious injury.

"We don't have anything to do with proximity devices," Browning said. "We don't have anything to do with strobe lights. I think that's something we need to look at."

Monday 26 August 2013

Qld: Miner suing Anglo over unsafe work area

Extract from The Morning Bulletin

The A Queensland man is suing Anglo American for \$1.3 million claiming an accident at a Queensland coal mine left him with permanent spine injuries.

In his claim, the worker said he had been operating a dozer in the steep key cut of a dragline work area in February 2008, at Anglo Coal's Callide coal mine.

The man said he was reversing the dozer when the machine slipped and dropped 1.5 metres down a rock face, causing his neck and body to twist to the rear, as he was looking behind while reversing.

A cervical spine injury sustained as part of the accident has impacted the man's ability to work, the claim said.

The worker will argue Anglo failed to provide a safe workplace, with the absence of a properly designed drill pattern plan contributing to the injuries sustained in the accident.

The miner also said the company neglected to drill blast holes appropriately so as to prevent large rocks forming by the blasting process.

The worker has claimed \$1.26 million in damages.

Anglo has been given ten days to respond to the claims.

Anglo's Callide coal mine is an open cut operation located about 120km south west of Gladstone.

The site has been the scene of a number of safety incidents over the last few years.

In 2011 operations were halted at the site after a bulldozer was buried during excavation work, Wade Anthony McGovern claims he suffered spinal injuries as the result of a defective water truck at the site in 2008, while

in 2007, two men sustained serious burns to their face, arms and legs after an explosion and fire at the mine.

Tuesday 27 August 2013

NZ: Pike River 'ignored lessons'

Extract from stuff.co.nz

The Pike River mining disaster which killed 29 men was a "metaphor for human failure on many levels", barrister Nicholas Davidson has told a mining conference in Nelson.

New Zealand had an inferior record of health and safety, he told delegates in a session on insights into Pike River at the New Zealand branch of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy annual conference.

Davidson, of Christchurch, who represented some of the families during the royal commission of inquiry into the 2010 Pike River tragedy, said yesterday that "time consigns victims and families to the shelf of history". He continued to speak publicly on the matter in deference to those families.

"There's still a dearth of recognition of human elements [in disasters].

"Lessons have not been retained, we forget, we move on - there are periods of grace before something rises again to strike us," Davidson said.

Senior human factors consultant with Z Energy, Kathleen Callaghan, said Pike River was an accident waiting to happen.

"To be blunt, there's nothing new to be learned. It constitutes another failure to learn.

"Accidents like Pike River are not out of the blue. Impending disaster sticks out like dogs' balls."

She used the "swiss cheese" model used in the aviation industry as a template to show how accidents happened when the holes in the slices of cheese lined up.

"From day one, Pike River had significant holes in the slices," Callaghan said.

She said the risk of the holes aligning was ever-present throughout the work force.

"We are often one slice away from catastrophe," she said.

Davidson said what struck him during the inquiry was the lack of awareness of the consequence of workplace accidents.

A snapshot of interviews with the families about what the men thought of Pike River ranged from them hating the conditions, the general disorder, and there being no communication from people at the top.

Others had said it was the worst mine they had ever worked in, where "everything was broken down", to conditions leading to such fatigue that the "boss was sleeping standing up while working underground".

Davidson said Pike River and other disasters were sometimes the result of an inability by the people in charge to recognise and accept fault.

Journalist Rebecca Macfie, who has had a close media involvement in the tragedy, congratulated the conference organisers for having the courage to include it on the conference agenda.

She said Pike River was partially the result of a culture of arrogance and hubris, and a pattern of denial and self-delusion.

Macfie said the mine was "built on exaggeration" and began with the idea it could pursue its grand passion on the cheap, and with the use of other people's money.

She said morale in the company was terrible, and staff turnover was high.

"The death of 29 men underground was an extraordinary tragedy and remains the cause of ongoing torment, but it was the outcome of a succession of very ordinary misjudgments and mistakes," Macfie said.

Leading Safety consultancy director Hillary Bennett said "imperfect people and imperfect organisations" were part of reality.

It was important to look thoroughly into non-compliant behaviour because the issue was often around leadership and culture, she said.

"When things go wrong the default position is to blame someone. Humans are very often villains in the piece but that's not very helpful, and it doesn't stop us doing it again.

"It would be more helpful to ask, 'did it make sense to do what they did at the time?'.

"You can't stay in your shoes and try and understand what happened."

Wednesday 28 August 2013

Tanzania: Witness - a Boy's Mining Accident - Richard's Story, Tanzania

Extract from allafrica.com

PRESS RELEASE



[Tanzania: Hazardous Life of Child Gold Miners](#)

Richard, 11 years old at the time, was down in the gold mine pit when he heard his friends yelling for him to get out. Before he could react, he saw the landslide - caused by a collapsed wall - rushing toward him. The earth rammed into him and buried him up to his chest. Other miners hurried to dig Richard out, and he was taken to the nearest hospital where they diagnosed him with internal injuries. Even today, a year and a half later,

the pain in his mid-section sometimes makes it hard for him to walk.

Richard's story is familiar to people of rural southern Tanzania, where noisy, bustling towns seem to spring up in the middle of a sea of dried grass around small-scale mines, and where many people - including children - mine gold for a living. But mining is an especially dangerous job for children, in part because of the risk of injury, but also because miners handle toxic mercury to separate the gold from the ore.

A lively boy who becomes soft-spoken around strangers, Richard moved in with his aunt a few years ago, after his father died and his mother left. He began mining when he was about 9. Most of the money Richard earns in the mines goes toward school, where he's required to buy a uniform and pay a "desk fee," things his aunt can't afford. His aunt also travels, and the money she leaves Richard inevitably runs out before her return.

He's afraid to go back into the pit. But he still does. "I need something to sustain myself," he said.

Children as young as 8 are working in Tanzanian small-scale gold mines, according to the new Human Rights Watch report, *Toxic Toil*. They dig and drill in deep, unstable pits, work underground for shifts of up to 24 hours, and transport and crush heavy bags of gold ore. They also breathe in mercury vapor. Tanzanian boys and girls are lured to the gold mines in the hopes of lifting themselves out of poverty, but find themselves stuck in a dead-end cycle of danger and despair.

Tanzania already has strong laws banning children from mines, and the laws should be better enforced. But to help protect especially vulnerable children - orphans or children like Richard - the government, with the help of donor states, should include orphans in mining areas in programs that help them stay in school and transition out of the mines. The

government should also improve their access to secondary education and vocational training.

The mines Richard works in tend to be a series of large, interconnected holes or pits, some delving several feet deep. The children tend to work in the shallower areas. Richard has occasionally been chased off a mine by the mine owners, and once by a government official, but that is rare.

Generally, Richard and his friends collect stones and rocks, carrying the ones that aren't too heavy to the nearby processing area. There, they crush the stone either with larger stones or basic tools. Then a loud, clanging machine called ball mill grinds the stones even further into powder. The air is thick with metal-coated particles of mercury, gold and silver - everyone leaves this area with clothing caked with metallic dust.

Richard goes home to separate the gold from the ore. Near his house, he uses his hands to mix the gold ore with mercury, forming an amalgam. He puts the amalgam into a soda cap and uses a metal holder to hold the cap over a fire. The heat separates out the gold, but it also releases dangerous mercury vapors near his house. Then Richard throws any wastewater into a nearby pit.

Until his interview with Human Rights Watch, Richard had never heard that mercury was dangerous. In fact, mercury poisoning can cause numerous health problems, ranging from tremors and vision impairment to possible kidney and respiratory failure or even death.

Tanzania has helped craft a new global treaty to reduce mercury exposure worldwide. More than 140 governments agreed upon it in January. The Minamata Convention on Mercury, named for the site in Japan of a mercury poisoning disaster, will be adopted in October.

Mining and working with mercury could affect more than just Richard's health. As with other

children, it's gotten in the way of his education. "If you were number one during exams, when you start mining you start becoming number two or last," he said. Even teachers reprimand children for mining, Richard said, as they know their grades will slip.

Even Richard sees the pitfalls of mining. In fact, he doesn't like it at all. He simply needs the money for school. "Otherwise, I have never put mining into consideration," he said.

USA: Report issued on Raleigh County mining accident

Extract from MetroNews, WV, USA

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The federal Mine Safety and Health Administration has released a report in connection with a fatal mining accident that happened in Raleigh County on Feb. 7.

The accident claimed the life of Affinity Coal Company scoop operator Edward Finney. The 43-year-old Finney was crushed by the scoop after the equipment had been lifted off the mine floor by 30-ton service hoist at the Affinity Mine near Sophia.

Finney and two other workers were removing trash from a section of the underground mine by loading it into the scoop and then Finney would dump the scoop onto the hoist platform, which would take the trash to the surface.

MSHA's report said the gate safety switch on the hoist had been tampered with before the accident allowing the hoist to operate even when the gate was open.

MSHA said the automatic hoist had a 'return to home' feature that would operate if the gate switch was tampered with. The feature had the hoist return to the mine surface after five minutes without operator input.

One of Finney's coworkers told investigators he yelled for Finney to get out of the scoop's cab when he saw the hoist lift the equipment off the ground.

"He stated that Finney appeared to be falling, head first, to the mine floor about the same time the scoop bucket slipped off the hoist deck and fell to the ground, which created a lot of dust, making it difficult to see clearly," the report said. "(The worker) immediately ran to check Finney's condition and found him to be unresponsive, as he was located underneath the operator's deck of the scoop."

MSHA issued three safeguard orders and a citation against Affinity Coal in connection with the accident.

Affinity Coal was also named in MSHA's July inspections. The company was named in 13 citations, 10 unwarrantable failure orders and one imminent danger order.

The imminent danger order was issued when a foreman was seen riding as a passenger in the bucket of a rubber-tired scoop in a wet, rough and uneven entry.

Friday 30 August 2013

Fatal Accident at Bokoni Mine

Extract from www.juniorminingnetwork.com

JOHANNESBURG, - Atlatsa Resources Corporation announces with deep regret that a winch operator lost his life in a scraper winch-related accident at Bokoni Platinum Mine's (Bokoni) UM2 shaft section on Wednesday, 28 August 2013.

Immediately after the accident Bokoni mine management stopped operations at the affected section. The South African Department of Mineral Resources (DMR) then completed its inspection and issued a section 54 safety stoppage notice at UM2 shaft section.

Harold Motaung, CEO of Atlatsa, said, "We deeply regret losing a member of our family. An improving safety culture, with specific emphasis on changing individual behavioural patterns, is imperative to our overall transformation strategy at Bokoni.

Management will continue to place emphasis on this focus area, which has been disappointing over the past month."

Mining dictionary

A guide to coal mining terminology

C

Carbide bit More correctly, cemented tungsten carbide. A cutting or drilling bit for rock or coal, made by fusing an insert of moulded tungsten carbide to the cutting edge of a steel bit shank