
Mining Accident News No.0816

Sunday 17 August 2008

Siberia: 3 Killed in Evraz Coal Mining Accident

Extract from *The Moscow Times*

Three miners died Sunday in an accident at a Siberian coal mine owned by Evraz Group, the country's largest steelmaker by domestic volume, the company and the Emergency Situations Ministry said.

The accident occurred at around 8:45 a.m. local time at Mine No. 12 in Kiselyovsk, in the Kemerovo region, the ministry said. An investigation is under way to establish the cause.

Officials could not say whether production would be affected.

"There was an accident. Three people died," a ministry spokesman said. "Over 70 people were inside the mine at the time of the accident. All the rest have been moved out to the surface."

The ministry official said there had been "a breach of the technological process with methane involved," but he did not confirm an explosion.

"An investigation is being carried out to find out the reasons."

A spokesman for Evraz confirmed that three miners had died in an accident at the mine.

Evraz acquired full ownership of the mine in March 2005. Mine No. 12 produced 893,000 tons of coal in 2007, including over 667,000 tons of coking coal used in the steel industry, Evraz said on its web site.

Monday 18 August 2008

Two inspectors for whole state before Beaconsfield fall

Extract from *The Australian*

UNDER-RESOURCING of Tasmania's mine safety inspectorate was a factor in the 2006 fatal accident at the Beaconsfield gold mine, the official investigation into the tragedy found.

The inquest into the death of miner Larry Knight in the Anzac Day rockfall heard earlier today that the number of mine safety inspectors in Tasmania had been cut from 10 in 1994 to just two in the months before the accident.

An official report into the accident led by Greg Melick SC concluded this under-resourcing was "one of" the contributing factors to the tragedy.

The head of Tasmania's workplace safety regulator, Workplace Standards general manager Roy Ormorod, conceded the state government was continuing to ignore several key recommendations of the Melick report.

These included that Tasmania's Office of Mine Inspections be staffed by six inspectors – rather than the current four – and that three of these have mining qualifications.

Mr Ormorod conceded only two of the current four mine safety inspectors had mining qualifications and that one of these, Chief Inspector of Mines Fred Sears, also had increasing managerial duties.

The inquest continues. The Melick report still has not been made public and Mr Ormorod said this made it difficult for bureaucrats to know how to handle it.

USA: Mine Safety Continues to Improve

Extract from *Sunday Gazette – Mail, Charlestown, WV.*

The overall safety performance of the coal industry, which was brought into question as the result of tragic accidents in 2006, was the culmination of many years of gradual but continued improvement.

New advancements in mine extractive techniques and new safety technologies, together with an extraordinarily skilled and experienced work force have resulted in safer conditions, fewer accidents and overall safety improvements.

The industry has taken great pride in its safety record over the past couple of decades, and for good reason. In fact, most experienced miners throughout the industry and certified safety

professionals maintain that mining has become much safer today than what was realistically believed possible a few short years ago.

By its very nature, mining is unique (unlike any other business or industry) in that it is dependent on natural conditions and geology. Through their skills, training and hard work, miners attempt to control and manage the challenges of their environment - and they are good at it! It requires a supreme vigilance every minute of every shift.

Unfortunately, the tragic events of 2006 overshadowed decades of improvement and did not accurately reflect how technologically advanced or how safe coal mining has become.

On a comparative basis, mining accidents are on a downward trend and more reflective of recent performance. However, one mining death is one too many, and despite all the progress charted over the years, the events of 2006 underscored the fact that much work remained, particularly in the post-accident phase so that the effect of an accident can be minimized or mitigated.

Hence, many improvements have been made at the mine level in this important area.

Since January 2006, there have been three major mine safety reform efforts; one on the federal level with the passage of the MINER Act and two comprehensive reforms of West Virginia's Mine Safety Act.

These reforms, coupled with an array of new administrative rules, have resulted in new requirements for needed improvements in the industry's safety efforts, including:

- Additional state and mine site mine rescue teams.
- Statewide immediate accident notification system.
- Wireless communication systems.
- Additional Self Contained Self Rescuers (SCSRs).
- Underground safety shelters.
- Revised mine emergency preparedness plans.

- Individual tracking devices.
- Additional lifelines.
- New mine seal design, construction and examination criteria.
- Mine seal remediation plans.
- Atmospheric testing requirements.
- Additional belt ventilation measures.
- Increased enforcement, inspections and higher penalties.
- Mine foreman continuing-education programs.
- Miner training and retraining programs.

In addition, increased state and federal budget dollars have been appropriated for more mine inspectors and important health and safety research.

So the lessons learned from Sago and other accidents of the last two years have already been transformed into enhancements for West Virginia's mine safety program. Additional safety enhancements and miner protections are imminent as ongoing investigative and accident analysis continue.

However, all the new laws and safety improvements alone will not necessarily produce greater benefits. Equal attention must also be directed at worker behaviour and individual responsibility.

Although mine management is ultimately responsible for the safety performance of a particular mine, individual miners are not absolved from sharing in this responsibility.

Today's miner is incredibly experienced and masterful in his job. He knows the attendant dangers associated with mining and has all the tools and protections under law to carry out his daily job function in a safe manner.

The average miner is 55 years old and has 20 to 25 years of mining experience to boot. He represents a world-class journeyman within an industrialized work force. He must exercise daily vigilance while on the job and not allow carelessness or complacency to affect his individual job performance.

Daily routine and journeyman-level status often breed complacency, which has no place in a work environment that requires continuous personal attention and no room for error.

With the influx today of new apprentice-level miners into the work force, experienced miners should lead by example and counsel their younger colleagues.

The government must also accept responsibility beyond the enactment of new laws. It must work with mine management and the work force toward continuous improvement. It must also reject complacency within its own ranks as with abusive and uneven enforcement application.

A strong but fair and goal-oriented enforcement program is a healthy component of mine safety. The government should also strive to become a resourceful leader in mine safety and not merely function behind assigned power. Assigned power is basic and necessary, reverent power is desired. A helping hand and good solid advice are always welcome.

In the aftermath of the tragic Sago and other accidents of 2006, management, labour and government have worked well together to identify and develop workable safety solutions to improve the overall safety performance of the coal industry.

Additional improvements will only be realized if this unprecedented level of cooperation continues and the ultimate goal of creating a safe, secure and productive industry remains a shared responsibility.

South Africa: AngloGold temporarily shuts two main sections at TauTona

Extracts from Mining Weekly Online

Two main sections of AngloGold Ashanti's TauTona mine would remain closed for another day, following an inspection by the Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) on Monday into the death of a worker last week.

AngloGold Ashanti spokesperson Joanne Jones told *Mining Weekly Online* that a Section

54 notice had been issued to the mine, formalising the temporary closure of the two sections of the mine, which it had already closed on Friday, following a fatal fall-of-ground incident.

The mine on Friday reported that a miner had died after a seismic event had triggered a fall-of-ground, only four days after a tramming accident had led to the death of a worker at its Mponeng mine.

AngloGold Ashanti had subsequently closed the shaft pillar area of the TauTona mine where the fall-of-ground occurred, as well as a second area close to the shaft pillar area, but not directly part of the shaft pillar area, where some seismic activity was experienced later on Friday.

Jones explained that the two areas represented 20% of the mine's production and that it hoped to start reopening the areas by Tuesday afternoon.

"We are in touch with the DME on an ongoing basis and we hope to reopen the areas as soon as possible," she commented.

She added that the mine would hopefully reopen the second area it had closed on Tuesday, as well as start to reopen certain sections of the shaft pillar area, which it would do gradually.

TauTona produced 409 000 oz of gold in 2007, and reported five fatalities during the 12 months.

USA: West Virginia Mine Closed Pending Safety Investigation

Extracts from Insurance Journal, Southeast News

A West Virginia coal mine where two scoop accidents occurred within three months, including one fatal, has been closed during an investigation into the most recent incident.

The West Virginia Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training ordered the Wolf Run Sentinel Mine in Barbour County to cease

operations Aug. 13, one day after three miners were struck by a scoop.

Agency spokesman Hoy Murphy says one of the injured men remains hospitalized in Morgantown. The others were treated and released.

Murphy says state and federal mining officials are investigating the accident.

A spokesman for Wolf Run's parent, International Coal Group, says ICG is cooperating with investigators.

In May, a man was run over and killed by a scoop at the mine. ICG was cited for two safety violations for that accident.

Probe into Donnybrook worker's death continues

BRIBIE ISLAND QLD: Workplace Health and Safety (WHS) officers returned last week to the scene of a fatal accident near Bribie Island, north of Brisbane. A 27-year-old sand quarry worker died when a pontoon overturned in a small dam at Donnybrook just after 3pm AEST on Wednesday.

Police say four men were standing on the pontoon when it flipped over trapping one of the workers underneath. Police divers recovered the man's body late on Wednesday. WHS officers are investigating the cause of the accident.

Tuesday 19 August 2008

Mine inspectors not advised of rockfalls

Extracts from ABC News Online at: www.abc.net.au

It has been revealed that Tasmanian mining inspectors were not told about several rockfalls in the Beaconsfield Gold Mine before a fatal collapse 2 years ago.

Larry Knight was killed in the 2006 Anzac Day rockfall, and his colleagues Brant Webb and Todd Russell were trapped underground for a fortnight.

Tasmania's chief mining inspector Fred Sears has told the Launceston inquest that the

Beaconsfield Gold mine did not report several rockfalls before the collapse that killed Mr Knight.

Mr Sears said that between April 2004 and October 2005, there were several large rockfalls at the mine that he was not told about.

He said 'these things are quite big, they were not things that are just going to knock a bloke over, and these are things that can bury a truck'.

Mr Sears has told the inquest that although he was overworked at the time, if he had known about large rockfalls, he would have been alarmed and would have questioned the mine more thoroughly.

Mine inquest told extra inspectors not yet employed

Extracts from ABC News Online at: www.abc.net.au

An inquest has heard that Tasmania's mining inspectorate has not acted on any of the recommendations of a special investigation into the Beaconsfield Gold mine rockfall.

Mining inspectors are giving evidence at the Launceston inquest into the death of miner Larry Knight.

Mr Knight was killed in the 2006 Anzac Day rockfall, and his colleagues Brant Webb and Todd Russell were trapped underground for a fortnight.

The General Manager of Tasmania's workplace inspectors, Roy Ormerod, yesterday admitted the state's two mine inspectors were overstretched at the time of the 2006 Anzac Day rockfall.

Part of Greg Melick's investigation into the collapse has recommended that there be at least six mine inspectors in Tasmania.

Mr Ormerod said he was not sure his department needed to follow the recommendation. He said there will soon be five mine inspectors and his department is reviewing mine safety in addition to Federal and State Government reviews on the issue.

The Chief Inspector of Mines, Fred Sears, yesterday said he thought five inspectors would be sufficient but he wants to ensure they are properly trained. He will continue his evidence today.

The inquest also heard that Tasmanian mines were not reporting some rockfalls before a fatal collapse at the Beaconsfield goldmine.

Yesterday former mine inspector Mark Smith has told the Launceston inquest the safety laws left it up to the mine to decide whether rockfalls were big enough to be reported and on several occasions mine managers sent information in emails, which were not received until days later.

Mr Smith also told the inquest that he raised concerns about his workload a month before the fatal rockfall. He said the Chief Inspector of Mines, Fred Sears was tied up with the investigation into three deaths at Renison mine on the west coast, and that the rest of the work was left to him.

18 killed in latest Chinese mine accident

Extract from *Israeli News, Ynetnews.com*

Eighteen of 25 miners trapped in a coal mine after an explosion on Monday have died and the fate of the rest is unknown, a government office said.

The blast occurred Monday in the northeast province of Liaoning.

Wednesday 20 August 2008

Beaconsfield witness asks to revise his evidence

Extracts from ABC News Online at: www.abc.net.au

A witness at the Launceston inquest into the death of a Beaconsfield miner says he was confused when he took the stand and has asked to revise his evidence.

Phil Malkin was an acting shift boss in the days leading up to the 2006 Anzac Day rockfall that killed Larry Knight.

Initially he told the inquest the underground manager, Pat Ball, had asked him to break a

safety rule about five days before the mine collapse.

Today Mr Malkin said Mr Ball had visited him unannounced recently, and had encouraged him to change the details of his evidence.

Mr Malkin now says he was definitely asked to break the safety rule, but he can't be sure of the date.

Thursday 21 August 2008

Mines told to walk the talk after five die

Extract from *The Times, Johannesburg, South Africa*

NUM wants stricter penalties enforced

FIVE miners have died in the past week, prompting unions to ask if April's safety summit organised by Anglo American, and similar talk shops, have yielded any results.

Two workers died at Anglo Platinum's Mogalakwena and Amandelbult mines, one at Simmer & Jack's Buffelsfontein Mine in North West, and the other two at AngloGold's Mponeng and Tau Tona mines.

Lesiba Seshoka, National Union of Mineworkers spokesman, said: "We take a dim view of the situation and it is very disappointing that this happens at a time when mining companies are arguing for leniency on penalties."



GOING DOWN: Eleven deaths since January after a total of 25 last year cast grim shadow over Anglo Platinum
Picture: MARIANNE SCHWANKHART

The union is requesting strict penalties on non-safety compliance in mines.

"NUM is reiterating its position that the minimum penalty should be R1-million and the

maximum should be 10percent of their annual returns,” he said.

Simon Tebele, spokesman for Anglo Platinum said: “After the accidents, blasting and drilling was stopped from 3pm on Saturday until 6pm on Sunday. “We have a safety-first approach and it has to be understood that this is an accident.”

Since January this year, there have been 11 fatalities in Anglo Platinum and they had 25 deaths in 2007.

Frans Baleni, NUM general secretary said: “We will continue to mobilise our members to put pressure on management with regard to safety.

“We will also attend the September mine-safety summit to look at the results of the presidential safety audits.”

He also noted that South Africa needs tougher legislation and that employers should be held responsible for negligence.

UK: Young miner killed near Madoc

Extract from Standard Freeholder, Cornwall

Buried alive 300 metres below surface

WALES, UK, MADOC — A young man has been killed in a mining accident just southeast of Madoc earlier this morning.

Provincial police say the man was working approximately 300 metres below the surface at the Canada Talc Mine when rocks shifted shortly before 2 a.m. and he was buried alive.

At this time, the mine’s rescue unit is working with police to retrieve the man’s body from the mining shaft. No name has been released and more details about the accident are expected to be released later today.

The Ministry of Labour was also called in to investigate the incident.

Thursday 21 August 2008

Beaconsfield insurance claim dismissed

MELBOURNE, Tasmania's Beaconsfield mine has lost a battle for a \$45.5 million insurance claim over the shutdown of its business following a fatal 2006 rockfall.

Allstate Explorations - which co-owned and managed the mine at the time of the rockfall which killed miner Larry Knight - is pursuing QBE Insurance for business losses arising from the collapse.

The mine's owners have been locked in a battle with QBE over a clause in its policy, and today Victoria's Court of Appeal ruled in the insurer's favour.

The appeal judges ruled the policy did not cover financial losses if the mine was closed by civil authorities, unless the closure was due to physical damage.

A workplace inspector ordered a stop to all mining activity after the rock collapse in the northern Tasmanian mine killed Knight and trapped two other miners, Brant Webb and Todd Russell, for two weeks.

The mine's owners alleged the order was a result of the rockfall and the closure was an insured event, and therefore they should be covered for business losses.

But QBE denied the claim because the closure was not due to physical damage, a decision Justices Peter Buchanan, Julie Dodds-Streeton and Tony Pagone agreed with today.

Beaconsfield Gold chief executive officer Bill Colvin said the company would seek advice on whether to appeal today's decision and would release a statement tomorrow.

At the time of the rockfall, the mine was co-owned and managed by Allstate Explorations, run by the Perth-based administrator Michael Ryan and linked to Macquarie Bank.

Friday 22 August 2008

USA: Man's leg crushed in St. Lucie County mining accident

ST. LUCIE COUNTY — A man in his 30s was left in critical condition Thursday after his leg was crushed by a conveyor belt used in the mining of sand or rock, a St. Lucie County Fire District spokeswoman said Friday.

Fire District crews were called at 2:30 p.m. to Stewart Mining in the 13500 block of Indrio Road, Fire District spokeswoman Catherine Whitaker said.

The man, identified as 32-year-old Daniel E. Parramore in a St. Lucie County Sheriff's office report, was flown in critical condition to a southern trauma center.

One employee told investigators that he and Parramore were preparing to move a "cyclone sand stacker" when some wind grabbed the machine and it ran over Parramore's foot.

The company provides sand and other materials for roadways, golf courses and beach restoration according to its Web site.

Saturday 23 August 2008

Deadly Accident on Coal Company Property

Extract from MetroNews, W.Va, USA

A coal truck driver is dead following an accident late Friday night on the McDowell County property of Bluestone Mining Company.

The victim is identified as 38-year-old Danny Lee Jones of Bradshaw. State Mine Safety Director Ron Wooten says Bradshaw died when, after exiting the truck, it ran over him. It was only Jones' second day on the job.

Wooten ordered the shutdown of the mining operation until the investigation is complete.

Monday 25 August 2008

South Africa: Angloplat shaft still shut a week after accident

Extract from Reuters UK

JOHANNESBURG - A shaft at Anglo Platinum's second-biggest mine remained shut a week after a worker died in an accident, and the miner said it was in talks with authorities over its resumption.

Angloplat, the world's largest producer of platinum used mainly to make autocatalysts to reduce car emissions, said blasting and mining work at the number one shaft at Amandelbult was halted pending a green light from the Department of Minerals and Energy.

"It has not resumed yet since last Monday. What is affected is one shaft, not the entire mine," Simon Tebele, a spokesman for Angloplat, a unit of global mining group Anglo American told Reuters. A meeting would be held with DME officials on Tuesday afternoon regarding the shaft's re-opening, he added.

Tebele said the output lost at the shaft would be estimated once the repairs were completed.

Amandelbult produced 195,200 ounces in the half year to June, after it lost 91,100 ounces owing to flooding at the mine.

South Africa's mines' sector recorded 85 mine deaths by June this year after a jump to 221 mine deaths last year from 200 in 2006, prompting a strike by mineworkers, a national safety audit of mines and a review of the country's mine safety laws.

The DME has also resorted to closing down operations for investigations and repairs every time a worker dies at a mine.

USA W.Va.: Fifth Mining Death Could Result In Additional Training

Extract from MetroNews, W.Va, USA

State Mine Safety Director Ron Wooten says he's considering proposing additional training for coal truck drivers who take coal from Point-A to Point-B on surface mining sites in West Virginia.

Wooten's concern is growing after a fatal mining accident in McDowell County last Friday night. Danny Lee Jones, 38, of Bradshaw, was

killed when he got out of his coal truck on a haul road and it ran over him.

Wooten says Jones apparently tried to get the truck into a lower gear after going over a crown in the road, but it wouldn't go, so he got out and the truck ran over him. Jones had only been on the job at Bluestone Mining Company for two days.

Wooten says there is currently a separate certification required for coal truck drivers, but he says maybe they should receive more training. "I'm thinking very seriously about doing something to eliminate that certification and require miner's certification for everyone," Wooten told MetroNews Monday.

Jones' death is the fifth mining death this year in the state and at least three have involved miners who haven't been on their jobs very long. Director Wooten says he believes the current demand for coal and the retirements of experienced miners are contributing to the situation. "Because you're not only replacing experienced coal miners with inexperienced coal miners, but whatever growth is there also has to come with inexperienced coal miners," Wooten said.

The investigation into the McDowell County accident continues. The truck will be taken to a shop, taken apart and see what mechanically was wrong with it, if anything.

Tuesday 26 August 2008

WA: Mandurah man killed at a Pilbara mine site

Extract from ABC Online

A 29-year-old Mandurah man has been killed at a mine site in the Pilbara.

Newman Police are at scene of the accident at the Yandi mine site, 150 kilometres north of Newman.

Preliminary investigations reveal that the man received fatal injuries in a workshop accident.

The man's family has been notified but his name has not been released.

Coroner to rule on mine lawyers' return to inquest

Extracts from ABC News Online at: www.abc.net.au

A Tasmanian coroner will rule today on whether counsel for the Beaconsfield Gold mine can rejoin the inquest into the death of a miner two years ago.

In July, the lawyers for the mine withdrew from the inquest into the death of Larry Knight in the 2006 Anzac Day rockfall.

They said the company had nothing to add to the inquest until its mine managers were called to give evidence.

Yesterday afternoon independent investigator Scott Marisett was called to the stand.

In his report, Mr Marisett was critical of the mine's rock testing before the collapse.

The lawyer representing Beaconsfield Gold, David Neale, has requested permission to cross examine Mr Marisett.

The Coroner Rod Chandler said he was not expecting counsel for the mine to reappear for at least another week.

The coroner will decide today whether the mine can rejoin the inquest.

Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

K

kibble A barrel shaped bucket used to haul water or ore up a shaft. The steel frames of a kibble are often found at small mines.

kiln A chamber in which ore was calcined or heated. Common forms of kiln included gold roasting kilns, coke ovens and lime kilns.



Gold Kiln, Victoria, Australia