

Wednesday 27 August 2008

## **One missing in mine collapse in Zonguldak, Turkey**

*Extract from Today's Zaman, Istanbul, Turkey*

Rescue operations were under way yesterday to save one remaining trapped coal miner in a collapsed mine in the Kilimli district, near Zonguldak province.

One miner had been saved from the collapse, and another was found dead after rescuers dug up the collapsed shaft. The identity of the miner who died at the accident was released as Murat Balık, 21. Another miner, Erol Koçaklı, is still missing, and rescue crews were trying to locate his position, authorities said.

Officials also said the mine was being operated illegally, and they have launched an investigation to find out what happened to the shafts. In most illegal mines, primitive methods are employed to extract coal located deep within the earth, and safety precautions are widely ignored.

An official from the General Mine Workers Union who declined to give his name stated, "The government needs to exercise control over illegal mine operations." Speaking to Today's Zaman, the official continued, "Illegal mining has been going on for sometime, and it is very urgent for the authorities to take immediate actions."

Human Rights Association (İHD) President Hüsnü Özdil said the necessary control and supervision practices had been ignored and that flagrant violations were resulting in tragic accidents like this. Speaking to Today's Zaman, he noted that the government has to ensure the safety and security of workers through enforcement mechanisms.

Union statistics show authorities shut down around 200 mines a year in their combat of illegal mining operations. Industry observers say the problem is difficult to overcome since coal is a lucrative business. Operators put

immense pressure on workers to deliver a quick turnaround and make money.

Accidents are not uncommon in Turkish mines due to safety violations, outdated equipment and high concentrations of methane gas. A methane gas explosion in a Turkish coal mine in 2006 killed 17 miners. In Turkey's worst mining disaster, a gas explosion killed 270 workers near Zonguldak in 1992.

## **WA: BHP Billiton suspends Yandi mine operations due to fatal accident**

*Extract from RTT News, USA*

BHP Billiton said Tuesday that it has suspended Yandi mine operations, because of an accident occurred during last night. The incident resulted in the death of an HWE mining employee.

Details of the incident are still being established but an investigation into the incident is underway. The Yandi mine is located approximately 140km north west of Newman in Western Australia and is operated by HWE Mining. The onsite emergency team has been activated and external emergency services including police are attending the scene. BHP Billiton Iron Ore is working closely with HWE Mining on this incident, the company said.

## **TAS: Beaconsfield miner tells of finding body**

*Extract from ABC Online, Australia*

The man who found the body of a Beaconsfield miner after the 2006 rockfall has told an inquest of the conditions in the mine after the disaster.

Miner Walter Hvala was working at Beaconsfield when a rockfall killed Mr Knight and trapped two miners for a fortnight.

He has told the inquest via video link from Western Australia that after the rockfall he was asked to dig out the level 925 using a remote-controlled machine.

Miners were taking turns to operate the machine in three hour shifts.

Mr Hvala said he remembered digging one bucket of rubble before the body of Mr Knight was discovered.

He said the body was recovered from a smaller rockfall in front of the spot where two other miners were trapped.

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## Beaconsfield mine lawyers in surprise comeback

*Extract from The Australian*

**BEACONSFIELD Gold Mine has walked back into the inquest into the death of miner Larry Knight almost as dramatically as it abandoned the process four weeks ago.**

The about-face prompted Tasmanian Coroner Rod Chandler to ask counsel for the mine "what's changed?" and to reserve a decision on whether to allow it to cross-examine expert witnesses.



Aerial view of the Beaconsfield gold mine May 2, 2006 in Beaconsfield, Australia. (Getty Images: Ian Waldie, file photo)

The same legal team, acting under instructions from the mine and former managers, quit the inquest on its first day, saying it would return only when its clients were questioned late in proceedings. At the time this caused distress to

the Knight family, who were "devastated" at the mine's attitude, given the desire for answers about the 2006 Anzac Day tragedy.

Yesterday afternoon, counsel for the Beaconsfield Mine Joint Venture and former senior managers, headed by David Neal SC, returned and applied to cross-examine a number of witnesses.

"We have returned a little earlier than we had expected," Dr Neal told Mr Chandler.

The Coroner appeared unimpressed, telling Dr Neal that "when you left us last time rather dramatically" the court was informed counsel "couldn't offer us any assistance".

"What has changed?" Mr Chandler asked. He pointed out that counsel had been aware of witnesses to be called.

Dr Neal replied that his clients were aware of some evidence presented since then and had reviewed their position.

Mr Chandler replied: "Dr Neal, I am not going to make a decision on your application. I will consider it overnight."

The first witness Dr Neal said he wished to cross-examine was geotechnical engineer Scott Marisett, who helped investigate the rock-fall that killed Knight and trapped miners Todd Russell and Brant Webb for two weeks.

His report to the investigation headed by lawyer Greg Melick was tabled in evidence yesterday and sections were shown to the court, sitting in Launceston.

These included Mr Marisett's belief that the mine failed to conduct adequate tests to determine the properties of rock masses. He said flawed information might then have been used to determine the intervals between mining levels and the dimensions of production stopes and ground support design.

Mr Marisett also criticised the rock mass rating system used by Beaconsfield, noting that an alternative system would have factored in the impact of blasting and weathering.

The mine manager at the time of the accident, Matthew Gill, who is yet to give evidence, was in court yesterday afternoon.

The inquest has heard evidence miners were under pressure to extract gold from seismically vulnerable areas in the days leading up to the accident to make up a shortfall in a production target.

Miners claim they were told Macquarie Bank, the main creditor of mine manager Allstate Explorations, would close the mine if it fell significantly behind targets.

The inquest continues today.

### Beaconsfield mine design criticised

*Extract from ABC Online, Australia*

An independent investigator has criticised the Beaconsfield gold mine's methods and design prior to a fatal rockfall in 2006.

Scott Marisset prepared a report for the Tasmanian Government investigation into the rockfall which killed Larry Knight.

Mr Marisset found the mine did not test the rock enough before designing the mine, that it should have done a risk assessment before changing its methods and that the bolts used in the mine were too short to prevent the rockfall.



Mr Marisset told the inquest the bolts used for support were too short. (ABC News: Chook Brooks)

Mr Marisset told the inquest that during his investigation no-one at the mine was willing to take responsibility for designing support.

This morning Coroner Rod Chandler ruled that the mine's lawyers can return to the inquest to cross-examine Mr Marisset's evidence.

The mine's lawyers withdrew from proceedings last month, an act the Coroner has described as disrespectful.

### Mine lawyers blasted for 'gross disrespect'

*Extract from ABC Online, Australia*

A Tasmanian coroner has allowed lawyers for Beaconsfield Gold to return to the inquest into the death of a miner in a rockfall two years ago.

The lawyers representing Beaconsfield Gold pulled out of the inquest into Larry Knight's death last month before a statement from Mr Knight's widow was read out.

This morning the coroner Rod Chandler criticised the withdrawal.

He said it occurred without prior notice and showed disrespect to the court and gross disrespect to Mr Knight's family.



Beaconsfield Gold had shown 'gross disrespect' to Larry Knight's family. (AAP: Dale Cumming)

He said such conduct had no place in his court.

The coroner has ruled that the mine's lawyers can now return to proceedings to cross-examine the evidence of independent investigator Scott Marisset.

Mr Chandler said if he accepts Mr Marisset's evidence he will have to make a finding against the mine and therefore it is fair to let the mine respond.

## South Africa: Miner killed at Implats mine on eve of union's safety boycott at gold mines

Extract from *Creamer Media's Mining Weekly*

A worker has died at platinum-group metal (PGM) producer Impala Platinum's (Implats') no 10 Shaft on Tuesday night after a fall-of-ground incident, the company confirmed on Wednesday.

Implats spokesperson Alice Lourens told *Mining Weekly Online* that production at the shaft still was ongoing.

However, she explained that the worker was a development rock drill operator and the company had stopped on-rig development while the Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) and Implats were conducting an investigation.

She could not confirm when the investigation would be completed.

Meanwhile, workers at AngloGold Ashanti's TauTona mine, in Carletonville, would, on Thursday, attend a memorial service for a colleague who died in a fall-of-ground incident on August 15.

AngloGold Ashanti spokesperson Joanne Jones told *Mining Weekly Online* that the memorial service would be held at 16:00 and that the company anticipated normal production to continue for the rest of the day.

A section of the shaft pillar area where the worker had died still remained closed while the company was making sure that it was safe for work to continue, Jones commented.

AngloGold Ashanti had closed two sections of the mine on August 15 - the shaft pillar area where the fatality had occurred, and another where seismic activity was experienced. The second area had already been reopened.

Production at AngloGold Ashanti's Mponeng mine, also in Carletonville area, had also been disrupted on August 21, when nearly 16 000 workers had downed tools to observe a day of

mourning for a colleague who had died in a tramping accident the week before.

Gold producer DRDGold also confirmed that it had been informed by the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) that employees at its Blyvooruitzicht mine, south of Carletonville, intended on observing a day of mourning on Thursday.

NUM spokesperson Lesiba Seshoka said over 5 000 employees would down tools at the mine from 24:00 on Wednesday to 24:00 on Thursday, to mourn the death of a colleague who had died in a fall-of-ground incident last week.

DRDGold spokesperson James Duncan said the company had been informed that workers would not report for Wednesday's night shift or Thursday's day shift, but as far as DRDGold was aware, the employees would report for work for Thursday's night shift.

Meanwhile, PGM miner Eastplats had confirmed that three people had been seriously injured in an underground vehicle accident at the Crocodile River mine on Tuesday night. A vehicle carrying 11 people had collided with a utility vehicle.

"The people carrier was transporting employees to work in the no 1 decline shaft at Zandfontein. Three people have been hospitalised with serious injuries as a result. Other employees who were on the vehicle who sustained minor injuries were treated and have since been discharged from hospital," the company reported in a media release.

An investigation by the DME was under way.

Meanwhile, the NUM also expressed concern over the death of a 12-year-old boy who had drowned at a rehabilitated slime dam in Phomolong, near Welkom.



Thursday 28 August 2008

## Mine lawyers challenge expert investigator

*Extract from ABC Online, Australia*

Lawyers for the Beaconsfield Gold Mine have been questioning an expert about measures the mine took to prevent a rock fall on Anzac Day 2006 which killed miner Larry Knight.

The independent investigator, Scott Marisett, compiled a report into the fatal collapse and was critical of management for apparently mining three seismic active areas at once.

The mine's lawyers have been cross-examining Mr Marisett at the inquest in Launceston, focussing on a number of measures that management took to combat seismic activity after two rock falls in October 2005.

Mr Marisett confirmed that after the rock falls the mine had stopped taking out rock, briefed the Chief Inspector of mines, hired an experienced geotechnical expert to report on the incidents, and hired another consultant to analyse the mine's seismic data.

Lawyer, David Neal, suggested history showed the mine responding actively to seismic problems.

The first of Beaconsfield Gold's managers is due to give evidence next week.

Saturday 30 August 2008

## USA: Mine Worker's Death Probed

*Extract from Red Orbit.com*

Electrocution occurred at Asarco's Kearny site

Federal and state inspectors are investigating the electrocution of a worker at Tucson-based Asarco's Ray Mine, near Kearny, last week.

Electrical apprentice Peter Eudave, 41, was adjusting a light fixture on the outskirts of the copper pit when he was killed last Friday, according to a preliminary incident report prepared by inspectors with the Mine Safety

and Health Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor.

The federal agency's investigation is independent of an investigation by the office of the Arizona Mine Inspector, said Tim Evans, assistant mine inspector.

He said both agencies would issue reports on the accident.

The area of the mine where the accident occurred was closed immediately. Information on the incident was released Thursday after officials were contacted by the media.

On Thursday, federal inspectors allowed Asarco to resume operations at the site, said Amy Louviere, a spokeswoman for the federal agency. The state already had lifted its closure order, Evans said.

Eudave was working on a 480-volt floodlight at the tailings booster station when he came into contact with energized electrical wiring that supplies power to the light, the federal report said. He received a fatal electric shock, it said.

Eudave, a native of Superior, had worked at the Ray Mine - about 70 miles north of Tucson - for 14 years, said Celestino Flores, president of United Steelworkers Local 915.

In a statement, Asarco said the company was cooperating fully with the investigation.

"Our hearts go out to family members, friends and associates of our employees who suffered this tragic accident," the statement said.

Flores said miners and other workers have held fundraisers and pooled their money to help the family with funeral costs. Eudave's funeral is today.

"He was a hard worker," Flores said. "Such a good guy."

### MINING FATALITIES

Seven fatalities have occurred at Arizona mining sites in the past five years.

- \* 2004: Asarco's copper smelter in Hayden.
- \* 2005: Matthewsville Excavating sand and gravel mine in Thatcher.

- \* 2006: Rinker Materials Inc. sand and gravel mine in Phoenix.
- \* 2007: BHP-Billiton's Pinto Valley copper mine; Freeport- McMoRan's Safford copper mine; Resolution Copper Mining exploration drilling in Superior.
- \* 2008: Asarco's Ray copper mine in Kearny.

## South Africa: 2 miners killed at Elandsrand mine

Extract from *The Times*, Johannesburg, South Africa

Two miners died and one was injured at Harmony Gold's Elandsrand mine near Carletonville on Saturday morning, a mine statement said.

A seismic event measuring 1.2 on the Richter occurred at 9.42am and caused a fall of ground, which trapped three miners, spokeswoman Amelia Soares said.

Their colleagues and Mine Rescue Services managed to rescue them, but two died from their injuries and the third was admitted to hospital.

Work has stopped until further investigations have been completed.

The names of the deceased will be released once their families have been notified.

"Harmony's Chief Executive Graham Briggs and his management team express their sincere condolences to the families of the deceased and sympathy to those affected by today's tragic accident," the company said by email.

The National Union of Mineworkers said it is disturbed over the deaths of mineworkers.

"It appears very well that the industry is very satisfied with its talkshops and lack of action" said Frans Baleni, Num general secretary.

Harmony, the fifth largest gold mine in the world, said in a safety report that falls of ground "is still the biggest killer in Harmony mines" and that the majority of seismic events occurred at Elandsrand, where deep level mining takes place.

Tuesday 2 September 2008

## Mine geologist on 'steep learning curve'

Extract from *ABC Online*, Australia

A geologist at the Beaconsfield gold Mine has told of his inexperience in geotechnical issues before a fatal rockfall two years ago.

Adrian Penney is the first of the mine's managers to give evidence at the inquest into the death of Larry Knight.

Mr Penney was the mine's geotechnical geologist when the 2006 Anzac Day rockfall killed Mr Knight.

He has told the inquest that when he started work there in 2003, his role was mainly focussed on gold production but he gradually turned to geotechnical issues which he was not qualified to deal with.

Mr Penney said in 2004 he thought "it was going to be a steep learning curve".

But he was able to consult geotechnical expert Michael Turner from Perth, who acted as his mentor.

Mr Penney has described how he helped install a seismic monitoring system at the mine when he and other managers realised in 2004 there was a problem with seismic activity underground.

## Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

### L

#### lamp room

A room or building at a coal mine used to store and re-charge cap-lamps.

#### Lancashire boiler



The Lancashire boiler is cylindrical in extended form, with two circular tubes running through it, with two fire grates accessed by two doors in the front face. Heated gases passed through the tubes then returned along the flue beneath the boiler and passed again down the sides of the boiler to they chimney. Lancashire boilers were set in a masonry bed.