

Mining Accident News No.0903

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Sunday 18 January 2009

Poisonous gas kills five in north China mine

Extract from Xinhua, China

HOHHOT -- Five workers died of poisonous gas in a shaft in north China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region, a government spokesman confirmed Saturday.

The accident happened at about 5 pm Friday at a mine, which belonged to Shenhua Group Baotou Mining Co., Ltd., in Erdos City, said a spokesman for the regional work safety bureau.

The unidentified gas poisoned five people, one of whom died Friday and the other four died Saturday in hospital.

No further details are available.

Investigation into the accident is underway.

South Africa miners rescued after 20 hours underground

JOHANNESBURG (AFP) — Rescuers have saved 275 mine workers who had been trapped

underground, some for more than 20 hours, after lightning knocked out power to a gold mine, a spokesman said Sunday.

Lightning struck a power sub-station late Saturday, cutting to power to one of the shafts at the Blyvooruitzicht mine, run by DRD Gold South African Operations, in the northern part of the country, mine spokesman James Duncan told AFP.

A first group of 108 people were brought to the surface early Sunday, and the remaining 167 were rescued later in the evening, after more than 20 hours trapped underground, he said.

They had access to water and medical assistance, and none of them suffered serious injuries, Duncan added.

"They are perfectly safe but obviously tired and stressed," he said.

Mining is South Africa's main foreign exchange earner, and gold represents nine percent of the country's foreign earnings.

Monday 19 January 2009

Four dead, dozens injured in Indonesian mine collapse

Extract from The Jakarta Post, Jakarta

Four miners died and several others were injured when an illegal mine collapsed at Gunung Batu in West Lombok, West Nusa Tenggara, on Saturday.

Sekotong Police chief Lalu Mustakim told kompas.com on Sunday that the four killed, Adi Suryadi, H. Taufiq, Ubud and Aba Cin, had been taken to the West Lombok regional hospital.

"We received news that there were dozens involved in the incident. What's certain is that four have died, while four others are severely injured and bruised," he said.

Those injured are being treated at West Lombok hospital, he said.

Several Sekotong Police officers were dispatched to the site but had been unable to

reach it because of the hazardous state of the roads.

"The search and rescue team and police will again try to evacuate all the victims buried under the cliff at the mining site," Mustakim said.

This is the second mining accident in the past year.

In July 2008, three miners died after being buried under debris in an illegal mine in Bukit Kedaro, West Lombok.

This week in mining accident history

Some noteworthy accidents	
18 January 1918 Albion Mine, Allen Shaft, Stellarton, Nova Scotia	Explosion underground coal mine 88 killed

Romanian coal mine explosions kill 12 and injure 14

Extract from *ACTmedia, Bucharest, Romania*

Eight miners and four members of the rescue team were killed by two consecutive explosions in the Romanian coal mine Petrila, and another 14 miners were injured, six of them being in a critical stage.

Rescue teams managed to recover four bodies so far. The first explosion took place on Saturday, at noon, at a 950 meters depth, due to methane gas accumulation. A second explosion occurred during the evening, killing or injuring members of the rescue teams.

An official in the Health Ministry says that it is possible for another 16 - 19 people to be trapped in the galleries.

President Traian Basescu went to the site, visiting the injured miners in the hospital. Prime Minister Calin Tariceanu required that a coordinating group be set up and immediately sent to Petrila mine to back rescue operations.

The group is led by Viorel Palasca, secretary of state with the Ministry of Economy and Finance. This is the ninth tragic accident at Petrila mine over the past twenty years.

Wednesday 21 January 2009

Update: Indonesia - Dozens buried, miners still awaiting rescue

Extract from *The Jakarta Post, Mataram*

As of Monday, dozens of landslide victims in Batu Mujur, Sekotong district, West Lombok, have not yet been evacuated and the provincial disaster mitigation agency (Basarnas) is attempting to dispatch heavy machinery to the area.

"The heavy machinery will likely arrive in a long time due to the poor access to the area," said Basarnas head Saidar Rahman Jaya.

Search workers had pulled four victims and rescued five injured people from the accident site as of Saturday night.

The accident did not stop other miners from continuing with their work as hundreds of miners began mining again not far from the scene of the landslide.

They were smashing rocks with sledgehammers, grinding stone into powder and placing large rocks into a 25 kilogram rice sack.

"Most of them stop working only when it rains," Liman, a miner, 40, told The Jakarta Post.

Liman and his brother, Puji, 38, are from the southwest Praya district in Central Lombok, and have been mining for five days at the Batu Mujur site.

They stopped working in rice fields after hearing stories from their friends about the gold mine in Sekotong. "we're lucky, we sometimes get an ounce from 10 sacks, which is not bad compared to working as farm hands," said Liman, adding he earns only Rp 12,000 (US\$1.00) as a farm hand each day.

Around 200 other miners search for gold in Sekotong, most of who come from west Lombok, Mataram, central Lombok and Java.

Previously, the miners sold their sacks of rocks for Rp 35,000 each to a collector, but now most of them can process the rocks into gold.

A miner from West Java, Rahman, 45, told the Post the gold content of rocks at Sekotong mine was larger compared to that in Taliwang, West Sumbawa.

"I have mined in Taliwang for three years, and it turned out that Sekotong is better. The gold content can reach up to 80 percent, at 22 and 23 carats," he said.

The gold process in Sekotong is also simpler, as rock is broken and brought to the stone crushers at several locations in East Sekotong village. just use mercury to separate the gold. A sack usually needs 300 grams of mercury," he said.

According to Rahman, miners can immediately sell their gold to traders or take it home. To determine the price, they just have to type GOLD and send a text message to 6788.

"The price fluctuates so we use the text message to determine the exact price. It's usually set at Rp 250,000. Imagine how much a miner earns if he can get three grams of gold a day."

Rahman however said miners usually did not follow safety precautions. landslide was blamed on negligence and carelessness. They should have dug the lower part first and restrained the rocks above with planks," he said.

The West Lombok regency recorded eight traditional gold mines in Sekotong.

"Mining began in early 2008 and it has continued to expand," said regency spokesman Basirun Anwar.

The community learned of its gold prospects following a survey by a prospecting company which later canceled its investment plans.

Mining activity is illegal, however, as a local ordinance issued by the provincial administration in 2007 stipulates that gold mining is banned on Lombok.

Vic: Yallourn Mine collapse mystery... solved

THE Victorian Department of Primary Industries (DPI) has completed an inquiry into the Yallourn Mine collapse which washed away road and rail lines east of Melbourne in November 2007.

The collapse allowed the Latrobe River to flow directly in to the Yallourn Coal mine, which caused substantial damage to the mine conveyor systems and facilities. While no one was injured in the collapse, the DPI says the incident posed a "serious risk" to safety. A government-appointed mining warden has completed an inquiry into the incident, which found the failure occurred because of water pressures in the interseam clays underlying the coal.



Investigations found there was a 'failure of the geotechnical management system at all levels' and indication signs were 'not recognised or interpreted correctly by technical advisers and reviewers'.

The DPI Minerals and Petroleum Regulation is urging mine operators to complete risk assessments and ensure control measures are in place to prevent similar accidents from occurring in the future.

Stickler departs as MSHA chief

Extract from Daily Press, Newport News, VA, USA

CHARLESTON, W.Va. - Former President George Bush's head of the Mine Safety and Health Administration has left the agency.

Spokeswoman Amy Louviere confirmed Wednesday that director Richard Stickler departed Friday. She says longtime MSHA official Michael Davis is running the agency until a new director is named.

Bush appointed Stickler to head MSHA in October 2006 despite the objections of Senate Democrats and the United Mine Workers labour union.

Stickler, a native West Virginian, oversaw a flurry of new regulations covering rescue teams, safety equipment and other changes mandated by Congress after three high-profile fatal accidents in West Virginia and Kentucky in 2006.

Thursday 22 January 2009

Mine accident at Harmony mine claims one

Extract from Steelguru.com, India

Mining Weekly reported that Harmony Gold has stopped production at a section of its Elandsrand mine, near Carletonville, after a worker died at the weekend.

Mr Alwyn Pretorius, COO of Harmony for the North Region, said that a fall of ground incident on Saturday morning, caused by a seismic event, had claimed the life of a rock drill operator. The incident occurred about 2 780 meters below the surface.

He said that "The section of the mine in which scoping is conducted, and where the accident happened, will not be operational for the next two days. However, the rest of the operation would continue as normal."

Harmony estimated that about 20 kg of gold production would be lost for each day the mine is closed.

A meeting was called with the Department of Minerals and Energy directly following the incident, and an investigation was launched. Results on what might have caused the incident, as well as possible mitigation measures were expected on Tuesday.

Mining Fatality Review highlights risk areas

THE International Mining Fatality Review report has been updated to highlight key risk areas in mining environments.

The report covers more than 1,200 incidents and 13,800 fatalities from 16 countries over the past 142 years, to draw attention to proven risks that have occurred over time.

The updates were compiled by University of Wollongong student, Patrick MacNeill, who completed work experience with the NSW Department of Primary Industries [www.dpi.nsw.gov.au] (DPI) in 2008.

NSW DPI inspector, Wally Kopp, says there are "no new types of accidents".

"Only people with short memories and those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it," he said.

The report features a strong emphasis on Australian mines and is expected to assist mines and quarries to implement effective safety and preventative measures.

All data regarding the review is available from: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/minerals/safety/publications/statistical-publications/international-mining-fatality-review>.

Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

P

picking belts/picking table

A conveyor belt at the pit top of a coal mine that transports broken coal and rock past a series of men and boys called 'pickers' who removed any rock and break up large lumps of coal before the coal was loaded for dispatch. The process of picking was also used at some metal mines, usually to sort out high quality ore for further processing. This might be done on a paved or cobbled picking floor.

- Ed.