

Mining Accident News No.0904

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Saturday 24 January 2009

Eight killed in covered up China mine flooding

Extract from Xinhua, China

SHUOZHOU, Shanxi -- At least eight people were confirmed dead in a coal mine flood accident that was concealed by the owners last month in north China's Shanxi Province, the local government said Saturday.

A government investigation, involving more than 100 police officers, discovered that seven workers killed in the accident had been cremated and buried by family members, according to the government of Shuozhou city.

A body, whose identity is still unconfirmed, was recovered on Jan. 16 in the mine shaft.

A pit of Xinzhuang Coal Mining Company, based in Shanyin County, was flooded on Dec. 5. However, the company covered up the information about the accident and did not

report to the authorities. They even transferred the dead bodies to other places, chief of the mine Zhang Yudong confessed to the investigators.

Miners and their relatives were also dismissed by the company.

It is not clear how many miners were working underground when the flood gushed in. But police discovered 12 agreements signed between the company and families of the victims over how to deal with the aftermath.

The Shuozhou government did not elaborate on the content of the documents.

A police officer who declined to be named told Xinhua that the mining firm paid some families about 500,000 yuan to 600,000 yuan (87,717 U.S. dollars) each for not reporting the accident to authorities.

Police are hunting for three men responsible for the accident and the cover-up while a number of suspects have been detained.

An investigation team is still probing the accident.

Monday 26 January 2009

One Miner Dead, One Injured in Albania

Extract from BalkanInsight.com, Albania

One miner was killed and another injured on Sunday after a gallery collapsed at a chromium mine in the town of Bulqiza, in northern Albania.

Chromium is Albania's biggest mineral resource, and is one of the country's main exports. In 2007, Albania exported more than €130 million in chromium, nearly one-fifth of the country's total exports.

Although chromium prices have risen in recent years on international markets, investment in safety has remained low in Albania. Fifteen miners have lost their lives in the last 18 months, the bulk of them in the Bulqiza area, where mines are operated by some 40 companies.

According to the local media reports, the gallery where the accident took place was used by an unlicensed company.

Albania's mining industry has been mired in controversy due to the frequent accidents, and a Balkan Insight investigation in August 2008 discovered that many companies that have won major concessions from Albania to operate precious copper, gold, chromium and silver mines are failing to uphold their contracts.

Critics say that even when mining companies operating on concessionary contracts are blatantly failing to uphold their agreements, the government appears unwilling to act.

Worker dies at Anglo Platinum mine, South Africa

Extract from www.iol.co.za

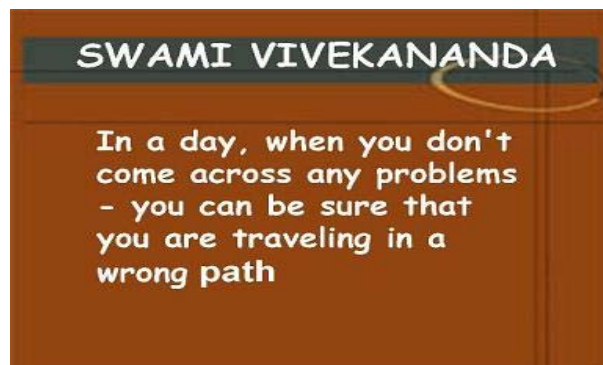
A worker was killed in an accident at Anglo Platinum's Paardekraal shaft two operation, the mining company said on Monday.

The death occurred on Sunday above ground, spokesperson Simon Tebele said.

A Section 54 notice had been issued and the Department of Minerals and Energy had ordered that all work be suspended at the shaft, Tebele said.

Paardekraal shaft two is situated near Rustenburg, North West Province, South Africa.

Quote of the week



Wednesday 28 January 2009

USA: Contractor killed at eastern Kanawha mine

Extract from *Charleston Gazette, WV, USA*

CHELYAN, W.Va. -- A miner was killed Wednesday morning as he left work at a Patriot Coal Corp. operation in eastern Kanawha County, officials said.

The worker died in a single-vehicle accident on a haul-road at the Samples Mine, said Ron Wooten, director of the state Office of Miners' Health, Safety and Training.

Patriot Coal spokeswoman Janine Orf in St. Louis said the worker was a contract employee leaving the company's Winchester Mine, an underground operation in the area.

"A number of the employees use that road as a shortcut," Wooten said. "He apparently went over the berm and rolled a couple of times and was fatally injured."

The victim's name was withheld pending notification of relatives. Orf says it's unclear what factors contributed to the accident.

If officials decide to count the accident as mining-related, it would be the first coal-mining death in the country in 2009.

NSW DPI Director Honoured in the 2009 Australia Day Awards



Congratulations to Rod Morrison, Director Mine & Forest Safety Performance, on receiving his Public Service Medal on Australia Day for outstanding service in developing enhanced safety measures within the mining industry in NSW.

Director General of DPI, Dr Richard Sheldrake today congratulated Rod saying the award is not only recognition of his distinguished career but of his role in developing enhanced safety measures within the mining industry in New South Wales.

"For the past decade Rod has been leading and managing the strategic approach to improve the safety and health performance in the New South Wales mining industry.

"In this time, he has managed a wide and changing reform agenda which has made a remarkable improvement to safety performance.

"In his current role Rod has completely changed the way the NSW Government manages mine safety legislation.

"This has had a significant impact in reducing the number of fatalities and injuries occurring in the mining industry in NSW and also established the work program of the Mine Safety Advisory Council" said Dr Sheldrake.

"The Public Service Medal is an important award within the Australian Honours system and recognises the community contribution made by public service officers through the outstanding performance of their duties" he added.

Thursday 29 January 2009

Aracoma foreman indicted in connection with mine deaths

Extract from Charleston Gazette, Charleston, WV, USA

CHARLESTON, W.Va. -- A foreman at Massey Energy's Aracoma Alma No. 1 Mine was indicted today on charges he failed to conduct required safety drills and then lied about it on safety reports.

The five-count indictment of Aracoma longwall foreman David R. Runyon stems from an ongoing federal criminal investigation of the January 2006 fire that killed two workers.

Runyon, 43, of Justice, was charged with two counts related to his alleged failure to conduct mine evacuation drills required by federal law. Both counts are misdemeanours.

The federal grand jury indictment also charges Runyon with three felony counts of faking safety reports to make it appear that those evacuation drills were actually conducted.

The charges against Runyon are the first in what is expected to be a series of criminal cases against various Massey foremen for their roles in the Jan. 19, 2006, fire that killed miners Don Bragg and Ellery Hatfield.

Two weeks ago, Massey's Aracoma Coal Co. subsidiary pleaded guilty to 10 criminal safety violations and agreed to pay \$2.5 million in criminal fines. The company also agreed to pay \$1.7 million in civil fines to resolve more than 1,300 civil violations cited by the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration.

During the fire, a crew of miners ran into thick, black smoke in their primary escape tunnel and had to try to find another way out of the mine. Bragg and Hatfield became separated from the group, got lost and eventually succumbed to the smoke.

Under its plea deal, Aracoma admitted to 10 criminal charges, including one felony. The charges included not providing a proper escape tunnel, not conducting evacuation drills, and faking a record book so it appeared the drills had been done.

Friday 30 January 2009

Worker dies at Harmony's Masimong mine in South Africa

Extract from Reuters UK

JOHANNESBURG, - Harmony Gold Mining said on Friday a worker had died at its Masimong mine in South Africa's Free State after a locomotive accident.

The company said it would launch an investigation into the cause of the accident on Monday.

Spokeswoman Marian van der Walt said production had not been stopped at the mine.

"We haven't stopped production. There was no work scheduled for the weekend and we are just going to put the guys through a refresher course on the use of locomotives," she said.

This week in mining accident history

Some noteworthy accidents	
25 January 1901 Davy Pit, Glenbuck, Muirkirk, Scotland	Fall of roof underground coal mine [Herald 26 January 1901] At Davy Pit, Glenbuck, Muirkirk, belonging to the Cairntable Coal Company, yesterday afternoon a fatal accident befell William Wilson, (21) miner, residing with his parents at Wanlass Place Muirkirk. Wilson was drawing the road, when a large fall from the roof took place killing him instantly. The body was removed home. Much sympathy is felt for the bereaved family. 1 killed
January 1994 Moura, Central Queensland	Gas explosion underground coal mine 2 killed

Monday 2 February 2009

MSHA sues Darby for unpaid penalties from disaster

Extract from Kentucky.com, Lexington, KY, USA

HARLAN, Ky. -- The federal government has sued an eastern Kentucky mine operator for non-payment of civil penalties assessed after a 2006 explosion that killed five miners.

The U.S. Labor Department's Mine Safety and Health Administration announced the lawsuit Monday. It is seeking \$505,012 from Kentucky Darby LLC, which includes unpaid civil penalties as well as interest and administrative fees.

Assistant Labor Secretary Michael A. Davis said in a statement that Darby had yet to pay for several violations, despite an agreement to

do so. The company has 20 days after the summons is served to respond.

Two miners died immediately during the May 20, 2006, blast at Darby Mine #1 in Harlan County. Three others died from carbon monoxide poisoning while trying to escape.

Tuesday 3 February 2009

South Africa's Harmony Gold Says Government Ordered Safety Training at Mine

Extract from Bloomberg.com

Harmony Gold Mining Co., Africa's third-largest producer of the metal, said the government ordered a "re-training" of workers after inspecting the site of a fatal accident at the Masimong mine in South Africa yesterday.

The government didn't suspend operations as is the usual practice, and the mine suffered no production losses following the Jan. 30 accident, Tom Smith, chief operating officer of the south region, said by mobile phone today

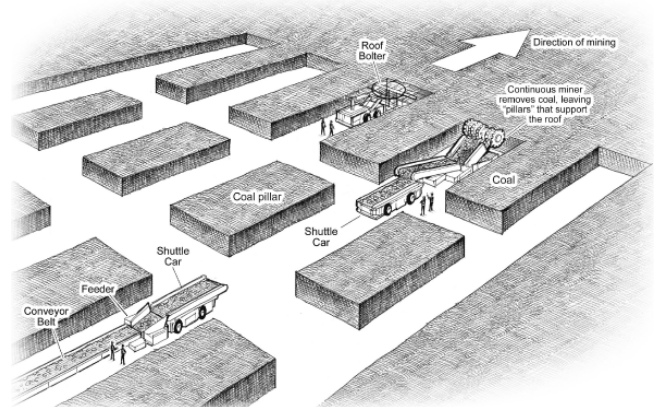
Mining dictionary

A guide to common mining terminology

P

pillar Most commonly used in coal mines to describe a block of unmined coal.

The following diagram illustrates a typical underground mining operation using room-and-pillar mining techniques:



- Ed.