Beat: Miscellaneous

China: At least 21 killed in latest mine accident

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USPA News - At least twenty-one workers were killed after the latest mine accident in southwestern China, officials said Tuesday. A gas outburst took place at the Machang Coal Mine in China`s Guizhou Province at around 8 p.m. local time on Tuesday evening.

Local authorities said a total of 83 miners were working unerground at the time of the accident, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported. However, only 58 of them were able to escape safely, as authorities confirmed the death toll of 21. The mine belongs to Guizhou Water & Mining Group`s Gemudi Company. While search-and-rescue operations continue, authorities have launched an investiation into the incident. Earlier in the month, another 11 miners were killed after a small fire spread toxic carbon monoxide throughout a coal mine in Huailai County near Zhangjiakou, a city in northern Hebei Province. The mine belongs to Zhangkuang Group, a subsidiary of Jizhong Energy Group Co. Safety conditions at mines in China have significantly improved in recent years but they remain among the world`s most dangerous with 1,384 deaths in 2012, a significant decrease from the 1,973 fatalities in 2011. The Chinese government reported 2,433 fatalities in 2010 and 2,631 in 2009. China in recent years shut down scores of small mines to improve safety and efficiency in the mining industry. The country has also ordered all mines to build emergency shelter systems by June 2013 which are to be equipped with machines to produce oxygen and air conditioning, protective walls and airtight doors to protect workers against toxic gases and other hazardous factors. The first manned test of such a permanent underground chamber was carried out in August 2011 when around 100 people - including managers, engineers, miners, medical staff, and the chamber`s developers - took part in a 48-hour test at a mine owned by the China National Coal Group in the city of Shuozhou in northern China`s Shanxi Province. One of the worst mining accidents in China in recent years happened in November 2009 when 104 workers were killed after several explosions at a coal mine in Heilongjiang province.

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