

Beat: Miscellaneous

6 killed, 11 missing after second blast at China mine

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USPA News - Six people were killed Monday and eleven others remain missing after a powerful gas explosion hit a coal mine in northeastern China, just days after another explosion claimed the lives of 28 workers trying to fix a gas leak at the same site, state-run media reported. The latest accident happened at around 10 a.m. local time on Monday at the state-owned Babao coal mine near the city of Baishan, located in Jiangyuan district in the northeastern province of Jilin.

At least seventeen people were working underground when the gas explosion happened. An unidentified spokesman from the provincial government told the state-run Xinhua news agency that the bodies of six miners had been recovered by late Monday afternoon, and rescue work is continuing to find eleven other miners who were also working at the time. He said the cause of the accident is being investigated, but Xinhua described it as a gas explosion. Liu Sen, an official at the State Administration of Work Safety, said the mine is part of Tonghua Mining Group Co., Ltd. Monday's accident comes just three days after another blast ripped through the Babao coal mine, although it was not immediately clear if both explosions happened at the exact same spot. Friday's explosion killed 28 technical workers from a safety team that had been sent underground to repair a reported gas leak. Thirteen others were injured but their conditions were not considered to be life-threatening. The explosions on Monday and Friday follow two other mine accidents in China in recent weeks. Thirteen people were killed on February 28 when a small fire spread toxic carbon monoxide throughout a coal mine in Hebei province, and 21 miners were killed on March 12 when a gas outburst occurred at the Machang coal mine in Guizhou province. 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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