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## China puts out coal fires after 60 years

*Sunday, 05 Jul, 2009*

Xinhua reported that Chinese miners in the far west of the country have put out a number of underground and surface coal fires that have been burning for 60 years.

The fires in the Xinjiang region caused by illegal mining and spontaneous combustion had spread over 9.7 million square feet at the Tielieke coal mines.

Xinhua said China's Xinjiang region is rich in minerals, coal, oil and natural gas. It has 2.2 trillion tonnes of projected coal reserves, 40% of China's total. China relies on coal for more than 70% of its energy needs.

The report said the fires caused losses of more than 10 million tonnes of coal a year and produced huge amounts of harmful carbon monoxide and sulfur dioxide.

Mr Cai Zhongyong chief engineer with the Xinjiang coal fire engineering bureau said the fires were put out after the government developed a plan that included drilling, water injection and using earth to cut off oxygen to the fire.

The Tielieke mines are about 600 miles southwest of the regional capital of Urumqi.

(Sourced from Xinhua)

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