
SA platinum miners still struggling with labor and restructuring issues

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Production reports from two of SA's biggest platinum miners for the September quarter showed management continuing to battle with labor and restructuring issues, although reports from diamond and iron ore producers were more positive.

The platinum price has near doubled to 1350 per ounce this week from a low of 732 per ounce last October, but the strong rand has maintained pressure on margins for platinum miners. SA is the world's biggest producer of the metal.

Anglo Platinum, the world's biggest platinum miner, put two more shafts on care and maintenance in August, bringing the number of shafts suspended in the past six months to three. It said it had eliminated 11715 jobs in the nine months to September, above its original target of 10000 jobs for the full year, and 714 more corporate posts would be cut.

Angloplat's attributable platinum production for the quarter was 616500 ounces, down 2% on the June quarter and 10% lower than a year ago. It said it was on track to meet its full year production forecast of 2.4 million ounce.

Lonmin, the third biggest platinum miner after Impala Platinum, said total mined tonnages in the September quarter dropped 20% to 2.6 million year on year because it had ceased opencast platinum mining at Marikana and Pandora. About 500000 tonnes of mined production was lost because of safety related stoppages, but there was an improvement in safety, despite the loss of three lives.

(Sourced from <http://allafrica.com>)

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