
Henan coal mine blast kills 35 and 44 missing

Wednesday, 09 Sep, 2009

Bloomberg reported that a gas explosion at a coal mine in China central Henan province killed 35 people and trapped 44 others, prompting the government to shut unregulated pits and intensify checks on work-safety measures.

The State Administration of Work Safety said in a statement a total of 93 people were working underground at the mine in Pingdingshan city when the blast occurred at around 1 AM local time. 14 managed to escape.

The State Administration of Work Safety said in its statement “Rescue work is still undergoing.”

Chinese President Mr Hu Jintao and Premier Mr Wen Jiabao gave guidance on the rescue work, while Vice Premier Mr Zhang Dejiang was sent to the site. Mr Zhang arrived at about 1.30 PM.

According to the Xinhua report the mine in Pingdingshan was undergoing an overhaul and had not been allowed to resume production by the municipal government.

The government has halted production at all of the city’s 157 mines cutting output in Henan by as much as 17%. Mr David Fang a director with the China Coal Transport and Distribution Association said the 157 mines that were shut in Henan produced about 15.43 million tonnes of coal in the first six months, compared with a total production of 89.38 million tonnes in the province.

He said that “The impact on the nation’s coal supply is limited given the small size of Henan’s output and the unlikelihood that the government will extend the closure of the small mines nationwide.”

(Sourced from Bloomberg)

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