

# Eight Miners Rescued after Three Days Underground

GILLIAN WONG, Associated Press



BEIJING (AP) — Eight Chinese miners were rescued Sunday after being trapped underground for more than three days in a flooded coal mine, while seven workers in another mine were killed by a gas explosion.

State broadcaster CCTV said the eight miners were lifted to the ground in Leiyang, a city in central Hunan province. Three other miners were believed to be still alive underground.

State television showed rescuers in orange suits and helmets lifting the workers on stretchers while a crowd of miners and others applauded. The survivors were placed in ambulances where nurses treated them before they were driven off to hospitals.

At another coal mine in the same province, a gas explosion killed seven workers Sunday morning in the city of Lianyuan, the official Xinhua News Agency said. Thirty-nine other workers managed to escape and an investigation into the cause of the accident is under way, the report said.

Calls to the Lianyuan city work safety bureau rang unanswered Sunday.

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The Leiyang mine flood trapped 16 workers on Wednesday and 11 of them were confirmed alive on Saturday, said a provincial official who refused to give his name as is customary.



Many of the miners were injured, Xinhua said. It said the flood in the mine occurred when 40 miners were working underground, and two dozen escaped.

Managers of the mine failed to report the accident in the required time, causing rescue efforts to be delayed by at least 12 hours, the agency reported. Mine managers often attempt to avoid punishment by either rescuing miners themselves or covering up accidents.

The mine owner is under police custody, Xinhua said.

Mine floods usually occur when miners drill through to abandoned shafts that have been allowed to fill with water. Along with gas explosions and cave-ins, they make China's coal mines the world's deadliest, although the death rate has fallen.

Safety improvements have cut annual fatalities by about one-third from a high of 6,995 in 2002. That improvement has come despite a tripling in the output of coal, which generates most of China's electrical power.

Technological advances, better training and the closing of the most dangerous, small-scale mining operations have also made rescues more successful.

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In April 2010, 115 miners were pulled from a flooded mine in the northern province of Shanxi after more than a week underground. They survived by eating sawdust, tree bark, paper and even coal. Some strapped themselves to the walls of the shafts with their belts to avoid drowning while they slept.

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