

Beat: Miscellaneous

Explosion at coal mine in southwest China kills 11

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USPA News - Eleven people were killed Thursday and several others were injured when an explosion ripped through a coal mine in southwestern China, state-run media reported, just a day after more than two dozen workers died in a fire at a coal mine elsewhere in the country. The latest accident happened on Thursday morning when an explosion occurred at the Songlin coal mine in Songhe, located in Pan County of Guizhou province, about 220 kilometers (136 miles) northeast of Kunming.

A total of nineteen people were working underground when the accident took place. Local authorities said rescue workers recovered the bodies of eleven people, while the other eight victims were either rescued or managed to get out safely, the Xinhua news agency reported. Details about their condition were not immediately released, and the cause of the explosion was also unknown. Thursday's deadly accident came just a day after 26 miners were killed and 50 others were injured in a fire at a coal mine in northeast China's Liaoning province. The State Administration of Work Safety said Thursday that the blaze was likely caused by gas combustion, but investigators are still working to determine whether it was related to a small tremor that hit about an hour before the fire broke out. Safety conditions at mines in China have rapidly improved in recent years, though they continue to be ranked as the world's most dangerous with 1,049 deaths reported in 2013, according to official figures. The Chinese government reported 1,384 fatalities in 2012, down from 1,973 fatalities in 2011, 2,433 fatalities in 2010, and 2,631 fatalities in 2009. China shut down scores of small mines in recent years to improve safety and efficiency in the mining industry. The government has also ordered all mines to build emergency shelter systems which need 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. One of China's worst mining accidents in recent years happened in November 2009 when 104 workers were killed in several explosions at a coal mine in northeastern Heilongjiang province.

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com