



A young boy holds a Chilean flag reading "We wait for you Esteban, Your Family" during celebrations after the crew drilling with the T-130 drill, finally made contact with the miners' shelter to reach 33 miners trapped deep underground. PHOTO: AFP

Breakthrough in Chile mine rescue

BBC ONLINE

Rescuers have drilled through to the underground chamber where 33 Chilean miners have been trapped since August.

The breakthrough at the San Jose mine came shortly after 0800 local time (1200 GMT), sparking celebrations.

It means efforts to remove the miners through the tunnel should begin within days.

The men were trapped when part of the mine col-

lapsed on 5 August - their 65-day ordeal is the longest suffered by a group of miners caught underground.

They have been living in a shelter 700m (2,300ft) underground. However, the Plan B drill - the second of three which have been working simultaneously - has penetrated 624m to a workshop which can be reached by the miners.

Officials say they still need to determine whether the

miners can be winched up through the exposed rock, or if they will have to wait for the shaft to be encased with steel piping.

Huge cranes have been brought in to lower the metal casing if it is needed.

Chile's Mining Minister Laurence Golborne has warned that it will be three to eight days before the rescue mission can begin.

Officials say everything needed for the rescue is now in place.

Relatives of the miners, many of whom have been camping near the mine since the collapse, milled around in excitement at the news. Sirens wailed in celebration.

Alicia Campos, the mother of trapped miner Daniel Herrera, said she was "very happy".

"I have a huge sense of relief because I feel I'll see my son soon," she told the BBC.

It has been a long wait for the families, says the BBC's

Tim Willcox at the scene.

For weeks they have been anxiously awaiting any snippet of news, and grabbing short opportunities to speak to their loved ones by phone.

Many families waited up all night in expectation of the breakthrough, our correspondent says.

When the rescue operation begins, a medic will be sent down the shaft initially, in a special capsule, to assess the miners. Then it is expected to take an hour to winch each man to safety.

The men are expected to be split into three groups. Some who are fit and have the most technical know-how will be chosen to go first - in case something goes wrong.

Then the weakest are expected to be brought to the surface.

A final group, including some of the strongest miners, will wait till last.

LAST DAY OF CLIMATE TALKS

China, US blame each other

AFP, Tianjin

The United States and China clashed on the final day of climate change talks yesterday, accusing each other of blocking progress ahead of a major summit next month on global warming.

The world's two biggest greenhouse gas polluters sparred throughout the six-day United Nations talks in China, triggering anger from environmentalists who said countries were acting in self-interest and not to save the planet.

US climate envoy Jonathan Pershing warned progress at the UN's annual climate summit in Cancun, Mexico, was in jeopardy because of China's refusal to commit to curbing greenhouse gases.

"We have made some very modest progress. But

unfortunately it's been quite limited," Pershing said of the talks in the northern Chinese city of Tianjin.

Delegates from more than 170 countries joined the latest round of long-running UN negotiations aimed at eventually securing a binding global treaty on how to limit and cope with climate change.

This would replace the Kyoto Protocol, which expires at the end of 2012 and aims to keep global warming below the threshold that scientists warn will trigger catastrophic damage to the world's climate system.

World leaders failed to broker such a treaty in Copenhagen last year as developed and developing nations battled over who should carry more of the burden in curbing greenhouse gases, which are blamed for global warming.

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Hungary fears a new toxic flood

AFP, Budapest

Hungarian police and soldiers evacuated 800 villagers yesterday as authorities said a second flood of toxic sludge from a chemicals plant was likely after new cracks appeared in a dyke.

The villagers were evacuated at dawn from Kolontar, which is close to the reservoir that burst in western Hungary Monday, killing seven people, injuring scores more and poisoning rivers in the country's worst ecological disaster.

Security forces also warned thousands of residents in the nearby village of Devecser to be ready to be moved if necessary, officials said.

Arabs give US 1 month to save ME talks

AP, Sirte

Arab League foreign ministers threw their weight behind the Palestinian president's refusal to negotiate with Israel unless it renews restrictions on West Bank settlement construction, but gave US mediators another month to keep peace talks from collapsing.

The grace period, agreed to Friday night at a meeting of the 22-member Arab bloc in Libya, gave the US some critical breathing room but also came with a warning to Israel of the dangerous consequences should it refuse to compromise.

Washington welcomed the outcome and pledged to forge ahead with efforts to keep both sides at the table in talks that began just over a month ago. They are the first direct Mideast peace talks in nearly two years, but they quickly faced a huge hurdle with the expiration of a 10-

month Israeli moratorium on new construction in West Bank settlements.

Israel has refused to end the curbs, though it is considering compromises. The Palestinians have said they won't return to the talks until the restrictions are again in place, arguing that any negotiations aimed at a two-state solution are pointless as long as Israel is building on land claimed by the Palestinians.

"We support the Palestinian president's position calling for a complete halt of all settlement activities in order to resume negotiation," the Arab League's deputy secretary general, Ahmad Bin Helli, said as he read a statement issued after the ministerial meeting.

But the ministers also said they would resume meetings in a month to study alternatives and decide on next steps, giving the United States extra time.

N Korea to throw party to announce successor

AP, Pyongyang

Red flags fluttered across the capital yesterday as North Korea prepared for its biggest parade ever, an event expected to serve as the public debut of future leader Kim Jong Un and for the world as a rare glimpse inside one of its most insular nations.

Officially, Sunday's parade marks the 65th anniversary of the communist nation's ruling Workers' Party. However, this year's celebration comes less than two weeks after Kim Jong Il's re-election to the party's top post and the news that his 20-something son would succeed his father and grandfather as leader.

Even in a country known for its elaborately staged displays of military might, the scale and pomp of the festivities suggest something special.

"This is a very important event because it's being held after Kim Jong Un's debut as heir-apparent," said Yoo Ho-yeol, a professor of North Korean studies at Korea University in Seoul.

The weekend of festivities began Friday night with fireworks that lit up the sky over central Pyongyang, footage from TV news agency APTN showed. Students danced across the city's plazas and brass bands played "Please Receive the Best Wishes of the People," the state-run Korean Central News Agency reported.

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Do you have blotches in your vision? - Take action now



Diabetic retinopathy is a disorder of the blood vessels in the retina. It affects those with diabetes and is a leading cause of blindness in adults.

Doctors at Singapore National Eye Centre, who perform over 1,000 cases of retina-related surgeries a year, advise to look out for the following:

- A gradual blurring of vision
- Dark clouds in your field of vision
- Distorted central vision

However, even in severe cases, you may not experience any pain although you may have hazy or complete loss of vision.

Treatment

- **Laser treatment** is carried out to seal or remove the abnormal leaking blood vessels. There is no need for special preparations and the procedure is carried out in an out-patient setting.
- Other **surgical procedures** such as vitrectomy may be required in advanced cases.
- The most successful treatment is **early detection** through regular eye check-ups and treatment.

For more information on diabetic retinopathy or other eye conditions, please go to www.healthxchange.com.sg/eye (Website content in English)

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