10 dead in central China mine accidents

A pair of accidents at two neighboring gold mines in central China's Henan Province killed 10 people Friday, local authorities said early Saturday.

Thick smoke engulfed a pit at Qinling gold mine of China National Gold Group in Lingbao City at 10:36 a.m. Friday, trapping 12 workers and six management staff, the press office of the city committee of the Communist Party of China said in a statement.

It said rescuers retrieved seven dead bodies in the pit Friday night. Of the 10 people who were found and sent to hospital, one failed to respond to emergency treatment and the other nine were recuperating.

One of the trapped workers remained missing as of Saturday morning. But search and rescue had to be halted in the pit, where carbon monoxide density was extremely high and visibility was less than 1 meter, the city's emergency response office said.

It said rescuers would use high-tech devices to locate the missing worker before search and rescue resumed.

A similar accident was reported in a neighboring gold pit at 3 p.m. Friday, the provincial work safety administration said Saturday.

Of the six workers trapped, four were rescued at 5:30 p.m. and the other two were found dead later in the evening.

The administration has launched an investigation.