

South Korea miners survive nine days underground on coffee

Two miners who spent nine days trapped in a collapsed South Korean zinc mine living on instant coffee powder have been rescued.

The men, aged 62 and 56, are believed to have kept warm by lighting a fire and building a tent out of plastic.

They are said to be in a stable condition.

It comes during a period of national mourning for South Korea, after more than 150 people were killed in a crush in the capital Seoul last week.

The two miners were stranded nearly 200 metres (650 feet) underground after part of the zinc mine they were working in collapsed on 26 October in Bonghwa, in the east of the country.

They were finally rescued on the night of 4 November - more than nine days after their ordeal began. Both were able to walk out of the mine and were taken to a local hospital. Their doctor said they should make a full recovery.

President Yoon Suk-yeol called their rescue "truly miraculous".

"Thank you and thank you again for coming back safely from the crossroads of life and death," he wrote on Facebook.

Authorities said the miners survived by drinking water that fell from the ceiling and using instant coffee mix powder as a meal.

The rescue operation began on Thursday when emergency workers drilled a hole and inserted a small camera in an effort to locate the miners, according to South Korea's Yonhap news agency.

The were eventually discovered sitting shoulder to shoulder to keep warm, in a spacious chamber where several mine shafts meet.

The niece of one of the survivors described how her uncle didn't recognise her when he came out, because he was wearing an eye-mask after nearly ten days in the dark. She described his rescue as "surreal", according to AFP news agency.

Source: <https://www.bbc.com/>