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New Explosion Rocks Russian Mine – 6 Dead, 26 Presumed Dead

By The Moscow Times

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A methane leak caused a new explosion Sunday in a coal mine in northern Russia, hitting a section where 26 workers had been trapped after a previous blast, and killing another six people, news reports said.

The 26 miners who had been trapped since the previous blast on Feb. 25 at the Severnaya coal mine in the far northern region of Komi are now presumed dead, Emergency Situations Minister Viktor Puchkov said Sunday, the Gazeta.ru news portal reported.

"We are forced to acknowledge that all the conditions that have formed at the affected section of the mine do not allow anybody to survive," Puchkov was quoted as saying. "Data indicates that the underground space where the 26 miners were located has high temperatures and no oxygen."

Another four people had earlier been reported killed in the Feb. 25 blast.

The latest blast early Sunday killed five rescue workers and one miner, the report said.

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