

Officials' trials near in landslide case

by UPI

TAIYUAN, China -- Eighteen local Chinese officials accused of negligence in a landslide that killed 277 people will soon face trial, prosecutors say.

Two courts in Shanxi province have received the criminal files compiled against the officials for their roles in last year's disastrous collapse of an unlicensed iron ore dreg-retaining pond, which triggered a massive Sept. 8 landslide in Xiangfen county, the state-run Chinese news agency Xinhua reported Monday.

The avalanche of mud and mining waste struck an outdoor market near a village of more than 1,000 residents. Government investigations revealed the disaster was caused by negligence that allowed a dumping pond to be built in violation of regulations with almost no safety inspections, Xinhua said.

Court officials said the Linfen municipal intermediate people's court and the Xiangfen county court will announce the date of the hearings soon. Fifty-one people have been criminally charged so far, including the 18 held most responsible for the accident, whose trials are being held separately, the news agency said.

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