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## 5 killed, 33 injured in chemical plant explosion

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Five people were killed, 33 injured and two others are still missing following a chemical plant explosion on Sunday in Kunming, capital of southwestern Yunnan Province, the local government said.



The injured have been hospitalized and are out of danger. An official with the city's publicity office told Xinhua that seven seriously injured people were still in critical condition.

Rescuers were searching for the missing, according to a notice issued by the Kunming city government.

"Rescuers said that survival chances for the two missing are very slim," stated an official who declined to give his name.

The explosion took place inside a sulphuric acid plant under the state-run Yuntianhua International Chemical Industry Co., Ltd., a leading chemical fertilizer producer in China, at 3:52 a.m. Sunday. The blast caused a big fire.



Sulphur powder exploded, causing fire while workers were loading sacks of the chemical in front of a storehouse, investigators from the city's work safety administration said.

The fire was put out at around 8:00 a.m. on Sunday. Air quality in the neighborhood of the sulphuric acid plant, which is less than 40 kilometers from the downtown area of Kunming, remained normal, according to the city's environment protection bureau.

On Sunday afternoon, a great deal of sulphur powder could still be seen in the messy warehouse when policemen with masks and helmets were busy investigating at the scene.

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Wang Xiaoguang, vice mayor of Kunming, arrived at the site to supervise the rescue operation and told the city's factories to conduct thorough safety examinations.

The Kunming city government has set up a task force to investigate into the cause of the accident and to deal with the aftermath, said Wang.

Located at Haikou town in Xishan District in the western part of Kunming, the sulphuric acid plant is run by the Yunnan Sanhuan Chemical Industry Co., Ltd., a subsidiary of Yuntianhua International Chemical Industry Co., Ltd. The plant has more than 1,000 employees.

According to Huang Helong, an official with the Yunnan Sanhuan Chemical Industry Co., Ltd., all the victims were workers of the plant.