Freed from the tom

After 68 days half a mile below ground, trapped miners are poised for remarkable rescue

THE first of the 33 Chilean miners trapped half a mile underground was expected to taste freedom

early today.

After 68 days of drama that has held the world in suspense, the complex and dangerous rescue operation was due to get underway late last night. Paramedics were set to travel the 2,040ft down the rescue shaft at San Jose mine, in

down the rescue shaft at San Jose mine, in the moon-like surroundings of the Atacama desert, at 10pm – 6pm local time.

It was hoped the specially designed escape pod would bring the first miner to the surface two hours later at just past midnight. A provisional list of the order in which the miners would be brought up had been made, but authorities said this could change, with the team of mining experts and medics sent underground making the final decisions. final decisions.

It was widely expected that 31-year-old Florencio Avalos would be the first to

From Matheus Sanchez at the San Jose mine. Chile

emerge from the rescue borehole and step out of the already iconic Phoenix capsule, which has been painted in the red, blue and white of the Chilean flag.

Although there are miners whose health is of more concern, rescuers wanted to fine-tune the journey to the surface as much as possible before their turn.

The decision means five men who are technically experienced and in good phys-

the decision means live men who are technically experienced and in good phys-ical shape are first in the queue, to deal with what will probably be the slower and more uncertain trips and to provide the rescuers with detailed feedback. Father-of-two Mr Avalos, who is so shy he took on the role of camerama under-

ground so as not to appear in the videos sent to the surface, could now find himself

sent to the surface, could now find himself thrust into the international limelight.

Among the first group is also expected to be Mario Sepulveda, the charismatic presenter of the videos.

The second group, and the one which causes the most concern for rescuers, will consist of 11 men in a more delicate physical or emotional state.

The final group of 17 will be those who are strong enough to weather the physical tired-ness and anxiety of the roundthe-clock operation, which could take up to 48 hours. It is believed 54-year-old shift foreman Luiz Urzua will be the

last to leave.

The rescue capsule is just 21in wide. Metal casing has been used to reinforce the top of the shaft, to prevent crumbling rocks from breaking away. Each return trip is expected





Lifeline: The Phoenix rescue pod and relatives of Florencio Avalos, who could be the first freed

the journey up set to take 15 minutes at a speed of just under one-metre per second.
But in the case of medical emergencies, rescuers say the capsule could travel at treble

this speed.

Despite the expectation above ground, there were reminders that the operation still contains many dangers.

Accidents could happen, we could have mistakes,' said mining minister Laurence Golborne.

But Chilean president Sebastian Pinera was more positive. 'This started like a tragedy and I hope it ends like a blessing,' he said. 'My wife says the mountain is going to give birth to 33 new men and she is right.'

Once at the surface the miners.

will be greeted by a family member before being taken to a triage area and on to a field hospital. Last night, however, the miners sent up a message insisting that none would leave the mine's edge before all were freed.

The men have been trapped since August 5, spending the days in a refuge 2,257ft beneath the surface before moving up to 2,040ft for the rescue.

They're a tough breed, but the mental scars will run deep

AFTER ten weeks trapped half a mile underground in 91F (33C) heat and 80 per cent humidity, how will the miners react psychologically and physically to their release? Here Daily Mail Science Editor MICHAEL HANLON examines their ordeal and the effect it will have had.

BODY: Shortly after the miners were found to be alive and well, the Chilean authori-ties contacted scientists from Nasa to advise on their physical and psychological

wellbeing.
Like astronauts, the miners have been stuck in a confined, dark environment in which normal exercise is difficult and in which the rhythms of day and night cease to exist

Of course, these are not random mem-bers of the public. Though aged from 19 to their 60s, they are all tough, hardy and, for the most part, extremely fit tone, Edi-

son Pena, is reported to be running six miles a day through pitch-dark tunnels). The health of two of the men – Jose Ojeda, who has diabetes, and Jorge Galleguillos.

water pumped down from the surface, the miners have had plenty to drink and they have dug latrines, with natural springs washing away the waste.

Three hundred metres along a tunnel is another natural spring in which they are showering deally.

By Michael Hanlon

another natural spring in which they are showering daily.

To prevent motion sickness during their ascent, the miners have been given a mixture of aspirin and a high-calorie drink to settle their stomachs.

Physically, after returning to the surface, they should recover quickly. Some may be out of shape and all will find the piercing sunlight of the Atacama painful, but even after two months underground their eyes should readjust within a minute or so, say ophthalmologists.

MIND: Although the physi

of the miners, Yonni Barrios, will have some explaining to do – his wife Marta and mistress Susana have both been keeping a vigil at the surface.

More serious problems will be triggered by the extraordinary nature of their ordeal. Perhaps the most significant problem is likely to be sleep-disturbance as their body clocks are likely to have been disrupted by the lack of daylight.

Many, if not all, will suffer tiredness, insomnia and restlessness that could take many months to dissipate.

And sleep disturbances can exacerbate other mental problems such as anxiety. In video footage the miners have presented a cheerful and resilient face to the world. But letters to their families reveal the 'hell' they are going through.

It is likely that in the months ahead many will suffer mental problems including anxiety, depression and flashback Some might find it impossible to ever gunderground again and psychologists seven reading about their ordeal in smedia could trigger panic attacks.



Warner|eisure|Hotels



the rise

LLIMI

eing drunk in the pears as number ons plummets

tember 21, 2009

t of men and 4 per n show signs of alco ce, with the middle ggest drinkers, the on Centre found.

a price that is paid the poorest commuded: 'It is time to receare not a population drinkers with just a sponsible individuals others.' ster Lord Howe said: chol-related hospital rime, ill-health and nacceptable and we outlined our committing the problem by to stop the sale of cost, to review alcound price, and introher licensing regime.'

Trapped Chile miners to get first hot mea

From Matheus Sanchez In Santiago

DRILLING has begun in the

DRILLING has begun in the operation to rescue 33 miners trapped for more than three weeks half a mile underground. The equipment has taken a number of days to assemble, but the giant drill finally broke ground at 10pm on Monday as work started on the narrow pilot hole. The men, who became trapped when an access tunnel to the San Jose copper and gold mine col-

when an access tunnel to the San Jose copper and gold mine collapsed, were today set to get their first hot meal since their ordeal began on August 5.

The drilling machine will advance at a rate of only 15 or 20 yards per day to allow the controllers to adjust to different rock types to keep it on a straight line.

Once it breaks through to the miners' shelter area the hole will be widened to 28in in diameter, through which the men will be slowly brought up one by one in a slowly brought up one by one in a

cage.

However, the miners will need to work around the clock to move tons of rock that will fall into their mine shaft area and that could otherwise plug the hole.

It is feared the rescue operation could take up to four months, but a secondary hole will be simulta-

Rice, chopped beef and yoghurt

neously drilled in another part of the mine and could potentially reach the men much sooner. Work was due to start there tomorrow. So far three 8in boreholes have been used to send food and medi-

cation down to the men

been used to send food and medication down to the men.

However, efforts to lower temperatures in the cave – which regularly touch 86f (30c) – have failed, although the intense humidity has been reduced slightly thanks to one of the boreholes.

Chilean health minister Jaime Manalich said the men's condition has been stabilised – and their diet is being stepped up to prepare them for their first hot meal.

They have so far this week been receiving six meals a day, including ham sandwiches, cereal bars, fruit and a nutritional gel, as well as four litres of water.

According to press reports, they were today due to receive the hot meals they have been clamouring for since they were first found more than a week ago.

Medical experts reportedly said, if all went to plan, they would be receiving a meal of rice, chopped beef and yoghurt.

Rescue shaft to reach trapped miners today

A RESCUE borehole is expected to reach the 33 miners trapped half a mile underground in Chile today, two months after they were entombed by a roof collapse.

The men are said to be in good spirits as three separate drills

race to meet them.

Rescuers said the leading borehole, known as 'Plan B', could reach the group in the early hours of today (UK time) if drilling went without a hitch.

If all goes to plan, it means the complex final stage – with the men being winched up more than 600 yards through a 26-inch diameter hole – could begin as early as Monday night.

In preparation, the miners have been going through an exercise regime to keep themselves fit, From **Matheus Sanchez** in Copiapo, Chile

with one reportedly running six miles every day through the mine's tunnels.

The men's families, many of whom have been living near the mine in Camp Hope since the accident, were holding a vigil for the second night in a row in anticipation of the good news.

Chilean mining minister Laurence Golborne raised the families' expectations with a Twitter message, which said 'today could be a great day'. Last night Plan B was reportedly only around 40 yards away from reaching the contact point underground.

However, the families may still have to wait as long as ten more days to see their loved ones, as experts must decide whether the shaft needs lining to protect rescue capsules from the rock.

If they decide conditions are stable and smooth enough on their own, the rescue could potentially begin straight away, although it is expected at least a portion of the hole will be covered with the metal casing.

Despite their anxiety, the families have asked government officials to go through the full casing process to make sure the rescue is as safe as possible.

Norma Lagues, mother of 19year-old trapped miner Jimmy Sanchez, said: 'We are very excited about seeing them but having waited two months, we can wait a few more days. We need to make sure everything goes well.'

Pur

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Nor

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Panasonic ideas for life

Mutiny of the miners

Gang of five 'planned their own escape'

From Matheus Sanchez at the San Jose mine, northern Chile

A MUTINY broke out among the 33 men trapped for two months in a Chilean mine as a group decided to find their own way out, it was claimed last night.

With the miners potentially hours from rescue, revelations of an ongoing

rift have raised questions over the reported unity in their refuge nearly half a mile underground.

A 'pact of silence' is said to have been agreed among the men to keep the uglier side of their story out of the public eve amid rumours of heated arguments over their plight.

The 33 have been trapped 2,073 feet down since August 5 after a collapse at the San Jose gold and copper mine in northem Chile's Atacama desert.

But as thousands descend on the site ahead of their rescue set for Wednesday, but which could come as early as tomorrow - attention has turned to talk of rifts among the men.

There had been reports of

condition

fist fights, weeping and extreme depression caused by

their bleak situation, particu-

larly in the gruelling 17 days

It is understood that five

men, who had been subcon-

tracted to work at the mine

and do not have close relations

with the others, had 'broken

According to Chile's El Mer-

curio newspaper, they chose

to live in a separate part of

the mine even after the work-

ers had made contact with

the surface, refusing to follow

It is claimed that they also

refused to appear in the dra-

matic first video footage of

the men. The mutiny is

the chain of command.

away' from the main group.

before they were found alive.

up 2.073 feet one by one, in a trip lasting

THE RESCUE MISSION

Expert from mining company Codelco will be sent down in the capsule to check the conditions of the borehole

A paramedic from the Chilean navy's special forces is sent down to evaluate the

The miners deemed the most able will be the first to be winched 25 minutes

On arrival at the surface, the miners get sunglasses (below) to shield them from the blinding daylight and will be evaluated by a medical team



The men will be sent to a nearby field hospital where they will meet other family members and the president of Chile, before being airlifted to hospital

6 In 48 hours all the miners are expected to have been rescued and to have received medical attention

THE CAPSULE

M Dimensions: 21.5in wide, 14ft long andm weighs 992lb

It is fitted with wheels on shock absorbers to run against tunnel wall

believed to have occurred as recently as a few weeks ago at a time when the miners were being praised for their unity.

According to El Pais newspaper, as the men awaited decisions from the surface over rescue plans, the group of five decided to defy chosen leader Luiz Urzua, 54, and somehow make their own way out .

After frantic intervention from government officials, the men's contracts were transferred to the company in charge of the rescue and they were ordered to fall in line.

The rescue team's chief psychologist, Alberto Iturra, said that solved the problem. although rescue sources told local press the situation has not been 'completely sorted'. Health minister Jaime Manalich said: 'The miners are in high spirits, there is solidarity and camaraderie. They will tell us when they come out that they have faced difficulties but it's been impressive how they have managed to get around them and keep this enviable spirit.'

On Saturday, there were emotional scenes by the mine's edge when one of three tunnels being drilled by rescue teams finally broke through to the men's location.

Part of the bore hole needs to be lined with steel to protect the transport capsule from rock falls before the men are taken to the surface in a process expected to take up to 48 hours.







STARTS PAGE 43

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AT YOUR CONVENIENCE

UK scientists' landmark discovery is cheap, accurate — and offers hope to thousands

THE first reliable test of whether men are at a high risk of prostate cancer has been devel-oped by British scientists.

The breakthrough raises the prospect of millions being screened for the disease in the same way as women are for breast cancer. An accurate test

By Flona MacRae Science Reporter

for prostate cancer is the 'holy grail' of research into the disease – but has eluded scientists.

The test has so far proven to be twice as precise as the current method. It focuses on urine rather than blood, meaning it is cheaper and also has the advantage of dispensing with needles.

The £5.50 kit could be in wide-

spread use in GPs' surgeries in as little as four years.

Prostate is the most common cancer in British men, affecting 35,000 a year and killing more than 10,000.

Professor David Neal, a prostate cancer specialist at the Cambridge Research Institute, said: "This is a vital piece of research that could go a long way to find a long-awaited and much-needed reliable and easy test to identify Turn to Page 4



Barrios,

right.

mistress

Valenzuela greets him

vith a hug as he

reaches the surface

Susana

PROBABLY the bravest of all the 33 trapped miners was the one who asked for both his wife and his mistress to greet him on reaching the surface.

greet him on reaching the surface.
Yonni Barrios initially became known as
the group's 'doctor'.
He used knowledge gained from looking
after his diabetic mother to work with medical teams on the surface to diagnose and
help the men trapped with him.
But very soon the 50-year-old miner became
even better known for something rather less
noble. His wife and another woman were both
holding a vigil for him in Camp Hope.
Marta Salinas, 58, whom he married 28 years
ago, reportedly almost came to blows with

Husband emerges to face warring women who had to be pulled apart

According to Miss Salinas, Barrios had been dividing his time between the two women for the last couple of years. And it was Miss Valen-zuela who broke the news to her that there had been an accident at the mine.

As his wife began to get involved in his affairs on Camp Hope, he instructed teams on the surface to deal with his lover instead.

And as the day of the rescue finally approached.

DEBENHAMS

'He is either very cheeky or very idiotic,' said a

worried at all.'
In the end he was greeted by his mistress, his wife choosing to stay away. He emerged at 8:32pm UK time to be met by tearful Miss

He looked calm as he gingerly walked towards his mistress, who gave him a long hug, crying on his shoulder and occasionally pulling back to

look at him as if to make sure the

reunion was really happening.

After he emerged, his wife, who has three sons from an earlier relationship, said she is over Barrios and did not feel 'anything in particular'.

She said: I watched it on television. I'm very pleased they are all coming out well.

'I'm glad I didn't go to the mine, it was the correct decision. It would have been wrong if the two of us were there - I have children and grandchilren. That kind of situation wouldn't ave been good for my family, and my ons come first.

sons come arst.

'He is crazy and cocky to think I would do such a thing. I have a sense of decency.'

She said she could tell Barrios was

'holding back' in the reunion, as his girlfriend held him tightly and cried. 'I know she is impulsive, while he

'I won't even watch on TV'

going to be watching.'

She said she would not be visiting

him at the hospital. If he wants to see me or talk to me he can come find me. Otherwise we will talk through our

ome to have them.'
She said she is not bitter but had a

other miners.

"This is historic but soon it will be

According to reports, another Barterday has a five-year-old son with a woman he has not divorced and his girlfriend of seven months is

gifts people have sent him - he is welcome to have them.'

pregnant.

Another miner is said to have four She said she is not bitter but had a women claiming his affections and parting shot for her husband and the perhaps soon-to-be-increased income

They think they will all be million

Mr Barrios is thought not to be alone in his complex domestic

a wife he has not divorced, his curanother who says she is having an affair with him.

Been there, got the T-shirt

THE miners emerged wearing identi-cal T-shirts with the Chilean flag on the front and the message 'Thank you, Lord' in English and Spanish.
The back featured words from

Psalm 95: 'In his hand are the depths of the Earth, and the mountain peaks belong to him. To Him the glory and The T-shirts were made by the

brother of trapped miner Jose Hen-

riquez, an evangelist who has been the group's spiritual leader.

daily prayers, with many of the miners telling their families they had found a new faith in God since the accident One of those is Mario Gomez, the

eldest of the group, who went down on his knees for a prayer seconds after leaving the capsule.

From Page 7

the World Cup final Bursting from the 14ft capsule with manic energy, he punched the air and handed out nugpunched the air and handed out nug-gets of rock as souvenirs. 'Wait a

the president's hand.

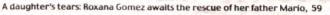
The moustached Sepulveda, aged 40, then raised eyebrows by making a smutty joke about his plans for a pass stonate maritial reunion when he got home. Then, turning to the mining minister, Laurence Golborne, who is of English descent, he said checkily. Hey Big Chiel what's up? Finally, he jogged over to the cheering crowd and led them in a soccer-style chant of 'Viva Chile' before being persuaded to the on a stretcher and be examined by a triage medical team—the protocol for all the miners. After basic tests, they were each flown by helicopter to the nearest hospital in the

city of Copiapo, 35 minutes away, where they have agreed to stay for at least two days, regardless of their condition. Before boarding the ambulance

however, the extroverted Sepulveda found time to give the first interview.
Allowing us a glimpse behind his e personal demons he faced whilst









Jubilation: Miner No 17, Omar Revgardas, 56

Unsung hero who went down first



THE unsung hero of the operation to save the miners is rescue expert Manuel Gonzalez - the man sent to get them out. He volunteered to risk his own life and travel down the 2,040ff shaft to co-ordinate the procedure from underground.
With a hug from the president of Chile, he is

pictured clambering into the capsule vester day en route to becoming the first person the miners would see from the surface since their ordeal began. 'Bring us back the miners,' President Sebastian Pinera told him.
Gonzalez, a former professional footballer in

his 30s, is a mine safety expert from Codelco Chile's state copper giant.
On his arrival inside the mine, a camera

showed him shaking hands and hugging some of the miners before standing in the middle of them to explain the plan of action. Gonzalez was expected to be the last person to be pulled out of the mine, having ensured the 33rd miner has gone before him

'Los 33' wooed by Hollywood

ALTHOUGH most of the miners are keen to abandon their career, they will have no prob lems making up for their annual wages of about £12,000.

various businessmen and organisations, with Bolivian president Evo Morales even saying he would guarantee a good living for his country-

man Carlos Mamani.

And television stations jostling for the exclusive first interview are said to be offering up to £250,000 for stories, while most of the miners are expected to be involved in movie and book

Weeks before the drama concluded, a Chilean film company claimed to be already producing a feature based on 'Los 33'. Now Hollyfuriously to put together a blockbuster inspired by their story.

The miners are also looking for a book deal

based on their gruelling experience.

actor Javier Bardem is said to have been lined up to play Sepulveda. The men's families have also been bombarded with offers to appear on chat shows and write books

They are said to have pledged to They are said to have piedged to pool the proceeds of these various ventures; but whether this agree-ment holds in the coming weeks remains to be seen. In any case, this hardly squares

with a strong rumour doing the rounds in the days before the rescue began - that as the tension and fear of their predicament was ratcheted up, a bitter rift developed in the group.
Whilst officials have been at pains

to depict the miners as a model of camaraderie and almost military discipline, unified under the command of their shift leader, Luis Urzua, it is said that five of the men broke away and refused to community of the same that the screen at 3.55pm, they first the first the screen at 3.55pm, they first the first the first two founds at all of their two hours before the big breakthrough came, however. And it was so heart-stop-inguity exciting that, for a few seconds, even the most effusive Chilicago and observers fell silent. Gazing up at the screen at 3.55pm, they first

nicate with the others. There is even talk of fist-fights. But yesterday was all about the rescue, and no one who has been watching it unfold

who has been watching it unfold can doubt that it has been a brilliantly conceived and executed operation from start to finish.

After a two-hour delay whilst the Phoenix underwent final checks, it began at 1.34am, London time, yesterday, when the 21.5-inch wide capsule was lowered to a depth of 65h to ensure it would run smoothly on its reinforced wire pulley. As with every twist of the action, this brought cheers from the many hundreds watching the action on a giant screen in Camp Hope.

man has been saved. Ill refused to believe that help would come, the arrival of Mr Gonzalez ended all doubts. Bare-chested and sweat-ing, each man embraced him - then. giant screen in Camp Hope.
It would be a further two hours a few moments later Florencio

a few moments later Florencia Avalos was on his way.

The TV cameras panned to his mother, Maria Silva, who pronounced herself happy – but 'anxious'. She needn't have worried, for her son seemed to have been made

through the bottom of the rescue

shaft, then, seconds later, a grainy

mining company who first descended a mine with his father at

six years old, and has promised not

to return to the surface until every

figure came into view.

and told them without fuss that of it all dawned.

This was the unsung hero of the office, Manuel Gonzalez, a rescue specialist with Chile's state copper nining company who first sule's path inside its shaft, he was gone. Up, up ... into the unfathom-able darkness. To avoid the risk of blood clots he

had been dosed with aspirin and wore knee-length compression socks. Nothing had been left to chance and every imaginable pre-caution had been taken.

Yet it was only when the battered and scratched capsule nosed above the earth, 15 minutes later, and a

We did not see his final minutes in the hellish hole, but we can pre-sume he shook his comrades' hands the frosty night air - that the reality

he'd see them all in a few hours.

Then, with a groan from the tautened rope and a grinding of the wheels designed to smooth the cap
like them all in a few hours.

A group of men could be trapped for 69 days beneath almost half a mile of solid rock – but still they could be saved. Just like the first moonlanding, it seemed to prove that no task, no matter how hopeless it

task, no matter now nopeless it appears, is beyond humankind. And as usual, the Chilean presi-dent – or rather his First Lady – found exactly the right words to sum up the miracle. 'My wife says the mountain is going to give birth to 33 new men,' he said. 'She is right.'

Additional reporting: MATHEUS SANCHEZ in Chile

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Did you remember to turn the lights out? What the last rescuer out of Chilean mine was asked





Freedom: The miners, wearing sunglasses to protect their eyes from the light, at hospital with President Pinera. Right: Luis Urzua was the last miner to be rescued

IT was a light-hearted moment to round off a deadly serious operation.

As rescuer Manuel Gonzalez emerged from the capsule, with all 33 miners safely above ground, joking colleagues asked if he had turned off the light - he hadn't.

But it was the only thing overlooked in the perfectly executed rescue mission that was completed at almost 2am yesterday, sparking euphoric scenes across Chile.

And as the rest of the country celebrated their survival, the men themselves seemed in remarkable From Matheus Sanchez In Copiapo, Chile

shape as they appeared together in public for the first time, along with President Sebastian Pinera.

As they lined up for a photo at the Copiapo hospital with Mr Pinera, he challenged them to a football match against a government team - joking that the losers will be sent back to the mine.

Last night officials said the health of the men was so good they could begin returning home.

Doctors admitted they were stunned by the men's conditions

and were mostly dealing with dental problems and minor psychological issues. The only exceptions were a case of acute pneumonia, an eye injury, and one severe case of dental problems.

The men were still wearing sunglasses as they get used to the light after 70 days underground.

The photograph was taken hours after group leader Luis Urzua became the last miner to be rescued. As people across Chile celebrated, he led the rescue team in singing the national anthem before Mr Pinera announced operation San Lorenzo a success. The process had begun in the early hours of Wednesday, with Florencio Avalos the first up in the Phoenix capsule.

Former footballer Franklin Lobos raised a smile as he showed off some skills with a signed football handed to him seconds after leaving the capsule at 11.30pm UK time.

Soon after, the rescue team's chief Andre Sougarret broke down in tears as Richard Villaroel, 23, got out of the capsule and hugged him.

The 30th miner out, Raul Bustos, then completed his second miraculous escape in months, having survived the earthquake and tsunami

that struck southern Chile earlier this year. Mr Pinera covered the rescue hole for good at 4.30am - half past midnight in Chile - yesterday.

THE BBC will be forced to reduce coverage of major events including the G20 summit and the Oscars because it has spent so much on its coverage of the Chilean rescue.

World news editor Jon Williams sent a memo to executives saying it will have spent more than £100,000 on the coverage. The BBC's scale of coverage has been branded 'extraordinary' by rivals after it sent 26 people to South America.

Littlejohn - Page 17