

Elgi strikes gold at Penjom mines in South-East Asia

The high-performance Elgi rotary rig compressors has led to new production efficiency and cost savings at Penjom Mines in Malaysia

The Penjom gold mine in Malaysia is South-Asia's largest gold producer. A wholly owned subsidiary of Avocet Mining PLC, Penjom produced its one millionth ounce of gold in 2007.



The open pit mine adopts an innovative technique called reverse circulation drilling for exploration. The principal advantage of this drilling is that it allows for accurate sampling. Miners gauge the presence of gold deposits in the mining area by analyzing the samples drilled out from the earth. In the reverse circulation technique, the flush material is returned to the surface through a central passageway integrated in the drill system.

The reverse drilling rig used for excavating mines is air powered, demanding a high air pressure of 600-700 psig. During the initial phase Penjom tried air compressors from a MNC competitor, but were not satisfied with the performance. Penjom later partnered with Elgi to explore the possibility and the partnership struck gold!

This order is a major breakthrough for Elgi especially during the strong market upswing for mining and construction industry worldwide. The order is also unique because the reverse circulation drilling process requires extra air pressure from the air compressors.

Elgi's portable air compressor having an output of 1100 cfm at 350 psig is designed to be used independently to drill depths of upto 50 to 80 meters, beyond which a booster can be accompanied to generate extra air pressure for further drilling. When a drill reaches the water table, every 10 m of water produces one bar of back pressure. The 350 psig compressor provides better efficiency in these conditions as, even while operating deep into the water table, it will be running at the same speed enabling higher rates of penetration.

The 1100 / 350 rig compressor has resulted in faster drilling rates and good sample recovery at Penjom mines. Equipped to operate in fluctuating and ambient temperatures, Elgi's rig compressors have operated successfully for many hours now. The design also has a low specific energy requirement, allowing engine size to be minimised leading to increased fuel efficiency.

Continuous success and development of heavy duty rig compressors have ensured that Elgi remains at the forefront in providing compressed air solutions for mining in South-East Asia, Australia and Africa.

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