

Putin Visits His 'Cinderella' in Buryatia

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Prime Minister Vladimir Putin talking with local people including young girl Dasha Varfolomeyeva, left, whom he met two years ago to present her with a fairytale dress, as they walk in the village of

Putin Visits His 'Cinderella' in Buryatia Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has met for a second time with a girl from Buryatia who asked him for a fairytale dress in 2008, this time to have a cup of tea with her and present her with a laptop.

Darya Varfolomeyeva, now 12, had asked Putin during his annual live call-in show for a "dress like Cinderella's," saying her family could not afford one because of high unemployment in their village of Tugnui.

Putin invited the Varfolomeyevs to his Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow a few days later and gave frilly dresses to Darya and her sister.

He also ordered that efforts be made to boost the village's economy.

Putin visited the village to check its progress Friday during a trip to Buryatia for celebrations of the 350th anniversary of the republic's integration into Russia, the federal government [said](#) on its web site.

Putin had tea with the Varfolomeyevs, including Darya, who still sported the blue-and-white dress he gave her, even though she appeared to have almost grown out of it.

Putin praised the family for their homemade desserts and the village for its rapid development, which saw Tugnui construct a new school with a playground, a library and even a recording studio. He toured the facilities while wearing a long blue Buryatian scarf called a *khadak*, presented to him by Tugnui residents.

But he conceded that the village's economy remains troubled because "there is no production," and called for local farms to be rebuilt. He presented Darya and her sister with the laptop and a mobile phone.

At a celebratory concert in Ulan-Ude, the capital of the Siberian republic of 970,000, later Friday, Putin promised the republic 13 billion rubles (\$467 million) in federal funding over the next two years, Komsomolskaya Pravda [reported](#).

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