

Putin Faults Greed for Shipwreck

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KAZAN — Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said Thursday that "irresponsibility and greed" were to blame for a deadly riverboat accident that has killed at least 113 people.

Putin flew into Kazan on Thursday as divers recovered more bodies from the wreck of the Bulgaria tourist boat that sank to the bottom of the Volga River.

"So many victims, so many children were killed — it's awful that we have to pay such a homage for irresponsibility, for disorder, for greed, for the gross violation of the rules of technical safety," Putin said, Interfax reported.

Twenty people were still missing from Russia's worst river disaster in three decades and were presumed dead as divers neared the end of their search of the boat that sank Sunday, said Igor Panshin, an official with the regional branch of the Emergency Situations Ministry.

He said at least 24 of the bodies recovered were children.

The Bulgaria, a 79-meter river cruiser built in 1955, listed onto its right side during a thunderstorm and sank in three minutes in a broad stretch of the Volga in Tatarstan, trapping

many passengers inside.

Putin laid down crimson roses at the river port in Kazan where the doomed Bulgaria was supposed to dock. Putin was joined by Tatarstan's leader, Rustam Minnikhanov.

Survivors have said up to 30 children had gathered in a recreation room on the boat shortly before it sank, and emergency officials have said divers saw many bodies of children in the room.

Fluffy toys and flowers were laid out on the embankment on Thursday.

Authorities plan to use a crane to raise the wreck of the Bulgaria from the riverbed Saturday.

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