

Russian Region Mourns 3 Boys Killed by Hot Water

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A view of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky

A city in Russia's far eastern Kamchatka region was holding a day of mourning Friday over the deaths of three elementary schoolchildren who fell into a pool of near-boiling water that resulted from a burst pipeline, local kam24.ru news portal reported.

The Kamchatka Peninsula's regional Governor Vladimir Ilyukhin declared a day of mourning in the region's capital Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky, urging local authorities to cancel any festive events, and broadcasters to remove all entertainment shows and commercials from their programming, the report said.

He also expressed condolences to the children's families and called for an investigation into the incident, kam24.ru reported.

The mourning comes a day after three 8-year-old boys fatally fell into a ditch filled with

near-boiling water close to their school, the report said.

The boys' parents called the police after their children failed to return home from school, prompting a search by officers, rescue workers and volunteers, the Interfax news agency reported. The boys' bodies were found in the water late in the evening, the report said.

“How could have children ended up in a heat camera filled with boiling water right next to their school?” the regional governor was quoted by kam24.ru as saying. “I think this was criminal negligence, which caused the deaths of children, a horrible death.”

Footage from closed-circuit cameras showed that after one of the boys fell into the scorching water, his friends attempted to pull him out by the straps of his backpack, but also fell in, regional children's rights ombudsman Viktor Tyumentsev was quoted by Interfax as saying Friday.

The pool of hot water was formed at a spot where two heat pipelines converge and go underground, the report said.

At the time of the incident, the pool was covered only by particle boards, which gave way under the little boy's weight, Tyumentsev said, Interfax reported.

Local residents said they had been calling emergency services for several days before the incident to complain about the pool of steaming water, but nothing had been done to fix the problem, kam24.ru reported.

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