

Officials want Brazilian airport to close

by UPI

SAO PAULO -- Brazil's Federal Public Ministry called for the country's busiest airport to close in the wake of a crash that killed at least 187 people. The call to close Sao Paulo's Congonhas airport followed reports that the recently repaved runway wasn't properly grooved to drain away water during rainstorms. However top aviation officials said Thursday that the runway was not the cause for the accident, Agencia Estado reported. The late Tuesday crash of Brazilian airline TAM occurred during heavy rains that caused pilots to lose control of the plane and slam into a gas station, setting the commercial airliner ablaze. The number of dead could reach 200, said some officials, making it the deadliest crash in the country's history. The U.S. National Transportation and Safety Board sent investigators to Sao Paulo to look into the cause of the crash. A pilot told local media Wednesday that runways at Congonhas airport are unsafe and led to the crash.

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