

Mexico's ruling party suffers second assassination this year

MEXICO CITY — A young man assassinated a key official of Mexico's ruling party Wednesday, rocking a country already buffeted by a turbulent year of violence and rebellion.

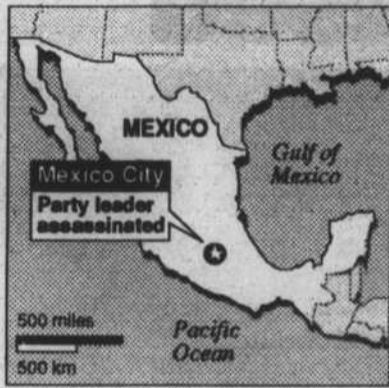
Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu, secretary-general of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI), was shot in the neck after getting into his car following a breakfast at a downtown hotel. Shattered glass from the passenger side window was strewn on the busy Paseo de la Reforma boulevard.

A bank guard tackled the gunman and turned him over to police. Officials did not immediately identify the dark-haired man or give a motive for what President Carlos Salinas de Gortari described as "a hideous crime."

"This is a day of mourning for PRIistas. This is a day of mourning for all Mexicans," said President-elect Ernesto Zedillo.

The killing shocked officials still recovering from the March 23 assassination of PRI presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio, shot at a Tijuana campaign rally. Zedillo won the Aug. 21 presidential election and takes power Dec. 1.

Both Zedillo and Salinas were at the Hospital Espanol where Ruiz Massieu, his shirt ripped open and soaked with blood, was rushed after



months of violence and political turbulence.

Despite the Mayan Indian movement uprising in southern Mexico that began New Year's Day, the PRI, which has governed Mexico since 1929, was able to gain 50 percent of the vote in the national election. Widely feared post-electoral violence failed to materialize.

Ruiz Massieu, a 48-year-old lawyer, was a rising figure in Mexican politics. He was elected to congress in August and was selected to lead the PRI delegation that would dominate the lower house.

He was governor of the western state of Guerrero from 1987 to 1993 and was named PRI secretary-general in May as the party reorganized itself in the wake of Colosio's murder.

Ruiz Massieu also represented the PRI before the Federal Electoral Institute.

Mexico's stock market plunged more than 3 percent after the shooting before bouncing back slightly in the afternoon. The value of the Mexican peso dipped slightly after the shooting.

Mexico City Mayor Manuel Aguilara described the weapon used as a sub-machine gun. Witnesses told local media it was an Uzi.

Ambassador James Jones said the U.S. government "deplores the act of senseless violence which has cost the life of Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu."

the shooting. Doctors said Ruiz Massieu had no pulse on arrival and was pronounced dead at 10:30 a.m., an hour after the shooting.

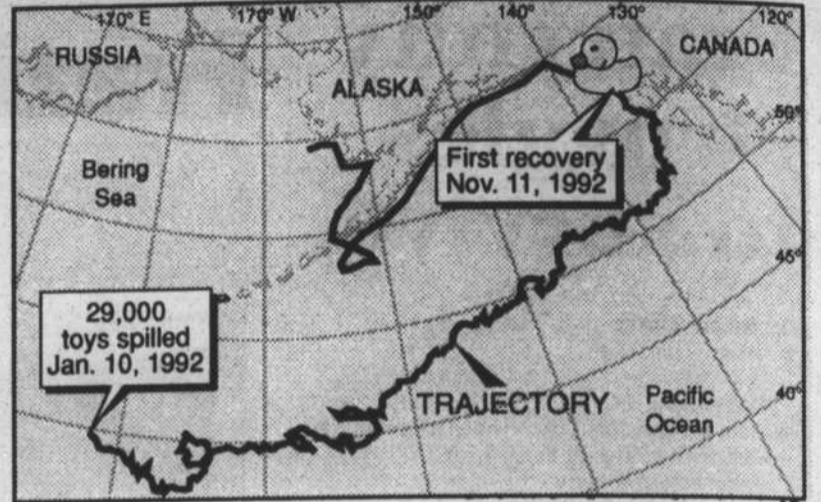
Deputy Attorney General Mario Ruiz Massieu, the slain man's brother, announced the death. He is in charge of prosecuting drug traffickers for the federal attorney general's office, which has the suspected gunman in custody.

Drug traffickers are accused of murdering Roman Catholic Cardinal Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo in a case of mistaken identity at the Guadalajara airport in May 1993.

The assassination of Ruiz Massieu, No. 2 in the ruling party, jolted Mexico just as the country appeared to be settling down after

Tracking rubber duckies

An accidental spill of thousands of bathtub toys into the North Pacific has led scientists to calculate their most likely path as they were carried by winds and currents. Shown is the toys' projected path into the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean.



Rubber ducks reveal ocean and wind flow

SAN FRANCISCO — In this age of computers, lasers and orbiting satellites, scientists are learning a lot from rubber duckies.

Some 29,000 rubber ducks, turtles and other bathtub toys spilled overboard on Jan. 10, 1992, in the North Pacific when a freighter carrying the cargo on its deck was hit by a storm.

So far, 400 of the bobbing toys have been found along 500 miles of Alaskan shoreline, and that is helping researchers trace wind and ocean currents.

"This is serious science," said Curtis Ebbesmeyer, an oceanographer

at Evans-Hamilton Inc., a consulting company in Seattle. "We are learning a great deal."

A preliminary study of the duckie migration was published this month in EOS, official journal of the American Geophysical Union, by Ebbesmeyer and computer modeler W. James Ingraham Jr. of the National Marine Fisheries Service in Seattle.

They also analyzed an earlier example of inadvertent oceanographic science when 61,000 Nike shoes fell off a ship in 1990 and floated toward the West Coast.

Empty life rafts found near ferry

TURKU, Finland — Frigid waters and raging winds turned the Baltic into a sea of death for more than 800 people when a ferry suddenly listed and sank in a storm early Wednesday. Authorities said 141 others survived.

Helicopters and ships searched for survivors and bodies off Finland's southwestern coast.

Officials said it was too early to say what caused the ferry to sink shortly after midnight about 25 miles from Uto island.

A surviving crew member said water started pouring through the Estonia's front cargo door and the ship rolled over and sank quickly.

Swedish safety inspectors had criticized the seals on the door before the ferry left Tallinn, Estonia, on Tuesday evening on its way to Stockholm, Sweden.

"We saw nothing that gave us a hint that something would go wrong," one of the inspectors, Ake Sjoblom, told Swedish television. "If we had, we would have sounded the alarm immediately."

Raimo Tiilikainen, the Finnish coast guard commodore coordinating the search, said four ships would remain in the area throughout Wednesday night but he held out no hope more survivors would be found.

Finnish police counted 141 survivors of the 964 people aboard.

Tiilikainen said the Estonia carried 776 passengers and 188 crew members. More than half the passengers came from Sweden.

The first word of the ferry's trouble came shortly after midnight, when it radioed Estonian authorities: "We are sinking! ... The engines have stopped!"

Survivors described scenes of panic as the ferry listed and started sinking in pitch darkness amid 35-foot waves. The water was 54 degrees and winds were blowing around 55 mph.

Sinking of the MS Estonia

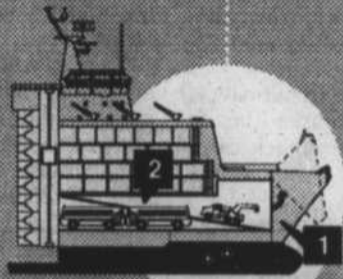


Tuesday, 7 p.m. - Ferry leaves Tallinn bound for Stockholm.

8:30 p.m. (approx.) - Ferry runs into heavy weather and 20-foot waves.

Wednesday, 12 a.m. (approx.) - Via closed-circuit TV, an engineer notices water coming in from the front bow door 1. Crew members think it's rain water and turn on bilge pumps. Soon, passengers hear a loud crashing sound. Crew puts out first mayday.

12:15 a.m. - Pumps are overwhelmed. The 28 trucks, two buses and several cars in the hold 2 are inundated. The ferry lists to the front from the weight of the water.



All times local

1:55 a.m. - The Estonia lists 30 degrees off-center; two of the ship's four engines shut off.

2 a.m. - The ship sinks stern-first. Some 40 covered lifeboats make it into the water.

Of the 964 passengers and crew who boarded the ship, fewer than 130 are known to have survived.

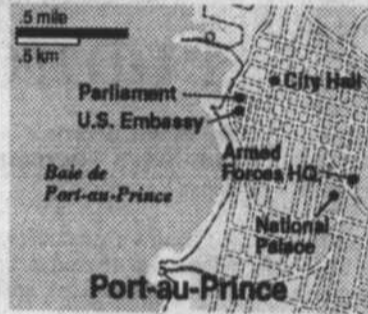


MS Estonia

- Jointly owned by Nordstrom and Thuin AB of Sweden and the Estonian government.
- Operated by the Estline, Estonia
- 515 feet long, 15,600 tons
- 188 crew members
- Passenger capacity: 2,000
- Vehicle capacity: 460

Source: AP research

Haiti developments



■ Parliament, shuttered for months, reopened with plans to discuss amnesty for the army officers who overthrew President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

■ U.S. troops will provide security at parliament and individually for certain deputies and senators who are emerging from hiding in Haiti or self-imposed exile in the United States and Canada.

■ The 1,000-member U.S. military police force that is in Haiti to help maintain public order during the military occupation began sending troops and equipment into police stations in Port-au-Prince.

Fay caught inhaling butane

KETTERING, Ohio — Michael Fay, the teen-ager flogged in Singapore for vandalizing cars, has gone into drug rehab for treatment of a butane-sniffing habit, his stepmother said Wednesday.

Jan Fay said her 19-year-old stepson was admitted to the Hazelden clinic in Minnesota several weeks ago after she and his father, George Fay, learned he had been inhaling the gas from pressurized cans to get high. Butane is used in cigarette lighters.

Michael Fay told her he was inhaling butane because it made him forget what happened in Singapore.

"But you can't blame Singapore for everything," she said. "Michael knows that now. He knows that he has to take responsibility for his actions."

Michael Fay received four lashes with a rattan cane and spent 83 days

in a Singapore prison after being accused of spray-painting cars. He denied the allegation and said police coerced a false confession from him.

Michael Fay was released from prison and returned to his father's home June 22.

On Sept. 2, he was treated at a hospital after his hands and face were burned. Jan Fay said he told her that he and some friends had been working on a car when someone struck a match and caused a flash.

A few days later she found about a dozen cans of butane in his room, she said. She and her husband confronted him.

"Finally, it all came out," Jan Fay said.

She said Michael Fay admitted that he had inhaled butane in Singapore, and was sniffing butane when he was burned Sept. 2. He agreed to get treatment.

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