

DOOMSDAY CULT AUM

Key events in the investigation of Aum Shinri Kyo cult leader Shoko Asahara, charged with the March 1995 nerve gas attack on Tokyo's subways and 16 other cases:

1989 November 4: Yokohama lawyer Tsutsumi Sakamoto, leading a legal crusade against the Aum Shinri Kyo cult, kidnapped with his family. Later, top members of the cult admit killing the family and burying bodies in mountains of northern Japan

1993 July 2: More than 100 residents of Tokyo's Koto district complain about noxious white fumes rising from buildings owned by Aum

1994 June 21: Seven people die and more than 200 others, including three judges handling a case involving Aum, sickened by fumes from the lethal nerve gas sarin in a residential area in Matsumoto in central Japan

1995: February 28: Kiyoshi Kariya, a Tokyo notary public who is trying to persuade wealthy sister to leave the cult, is abducted to the cult commune. Heavily drugged, he later dies

地下鉄 Kasumigaseki Sta SUBWAY



March 5: About 10 people are taken to hospital complaining of eye pain and trouble breathing after they inhale mysterious fumes in subway train in Yokohama

March 15: Three attache cases discovered at a Tokyo subway station, each containing three tanks with an unknown liquid, small motorized fans, vent and battery

March 20: Sarin spreads through Tokyo's subway system during morning rush hour, killing 12 people and injuring more than 5,500

March 22: Police begin raids on Aum facilities. They find chemicals used to make sarin, gun parts and evidence of biological and laser weapons

March 30: Unidentified gunman shoots and seriously wounds Takaji Kunitatsu, head of National Police Agency. Police suspect cult

April 19: Parliament passes a law outlawing sarin. About 500 people are sent to hospitals after a foul-smelling gas spreads through Yokohama station outside Tokyo, but there are no serious injuries

April 23: Hideo Murai, head of Aum's 'science ministry,' is stabbed and killed. Police suspect a cult leader ordered the killing so Murai couldn't testify about Aum's sarin-making facilities

May 5: Workers in Tokyo's busiest train station, Shinjuku, extinguish two burning bags of chemicals. If the fumes had combined, they could have formed deadly hydrocyanic gas

May 16: Cult leader Shoko Asahara is arrested. A letter bomb explodes in Tokyo's city hall, seriously injuring an aide of the governor, who advocated withdrawing Aum's religious permit

June 6: Asahara is charged with murder in subway attack

October 25: On eve of trial, Asahara fires his lawyer, forcing postponement.

1996: January 31: Supreme Court approves disbanding Aum, allowing the government to seize its assets

April 24: Asahara's trial opens in Tokyo

By The Associated Press

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