

Police search cult compound for substances used in subway attack

The sect denies involvement, saying the chemicals are used to make plastics.

TOKYO (AP) — Police returned Sunday to the main compound of a secretive doomsday cult, this time officially looking for evidence linking the group to a deadly nerve-gas attack on the crowded Tokyo subway. Hundreds of police armed with a warrant specifying they were investigating murders searched laboratories and storage areas for nine hours, seizing papers and chemicals. Sunday's raid was officially linked to the investigation of the March 20 attack on the morning rush-hour subway, which killed 12 people and left 5,000 others with symptoms such as seizures and temporary blindness. The sect has denied any involvement in the attacks, condemning the stockpiled chemicals

were used to make plastic, ceramics and pesticides.

Those claims were repeated Sunday in a television appearance by cult lawyer Yoshinobu Aoyama and Fumihiro Joyu, the leader of its Moscow branch, which claims 30,000 followers — three times the number of believers said to be in Japan.

Joyu said the chemicals were used to make a wide range of goods from toothpaste to plastic food containers that would help the group set up self-sufficient farming cooperatives. "There's been so much Aum Shinri Kyo-bashing recently that we find it harder and harder to buy what we need to buy," Joyu said on Asahi Television. "We have to make it ourselves."

Kyodo News Service and several major newspapers say police last year found chemical residues in soil samples around cult compounds that match the sarin used in the subway attacks as well as a mysterious chemical cloud that killed seven people last summer in Matsumoto, 125 miles west of Tokyo. Police have told Japanese newspapers that the cult's chemical stockpiles could yield

enough sarin to kill millions if used in an urban center. The estimates are vague, but give an indication of the potency of vapors from the liquid sarin, one tiny droplet of which can kill in seconds just by being inhaled or touching the skin.

"We find it harder and harder to buy what we need to buy. We have to make it ourselves."

— Fumihiro Joyu, branch leader of the Aum Shinri Kyo

Pakistani Prime Minister discusses challenges facing women with first lady

Pakistani women lack basic health care while American women want more opportunities in the work world.

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP) — Hillary Rodham Clinton and Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto pledged a mutual determination Sunday to help women improve their lot in life.

One on one and in public, two of the world's best-known women displayed what appeared to be a genuine kinship as Clinton began her 12-day tour of South Asia with a trip to the prime minister's residence.

"I know that much remains to be done in every society, in both of our countries, to ensure that women assume their rightful place and are given the opportunities to exercise their rights, but I am very optimistic by what I see happening in the world," Clinton said.

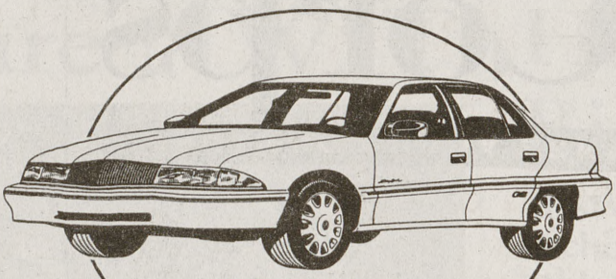
Neither woman is without her share of critics, however, and Bhutto took note of that when she told Clinton, "women who take on tough issues and stake out new territory are often on the receiving end of ignorance. I can personally attest to that."

Bhutto's critics say her government has failed to live up to her lofty words and that there has been no significant progress in improving the situation of women

in this male-dominated society. Setting such criticism aside, the first lady and Bhutto sought to emphasize the positive, including Pakistan's efforts to reserve government jobs for women, establish a women's development bank, set up special women's police stations and train women health-care workers.

The magnitude of the challenge facing women differs sharply between the United States and Pakistan. Where women in the United States want more opportunities for advancement in the work world, many Pakistani women lack access to basic health care, education and family planning and are allowed only limited participation in society.

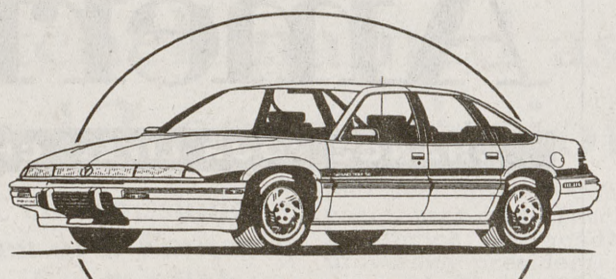
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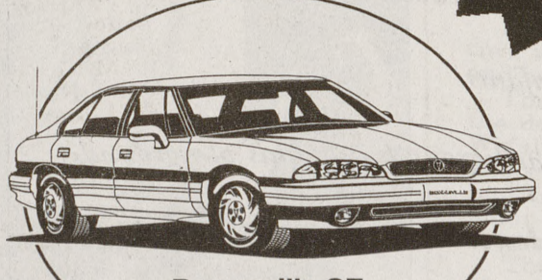


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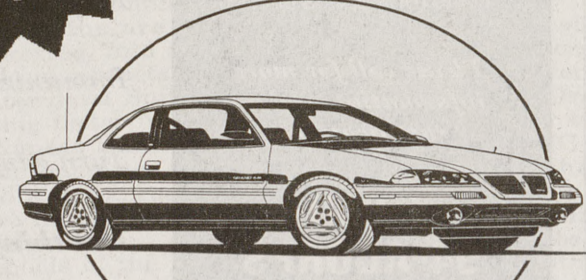
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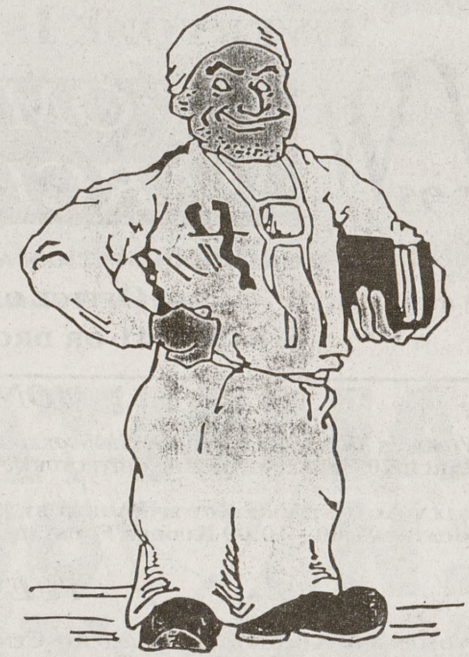
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