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Imminent arrest of Chief of Defence Staff Admiral Wijegunaratne???

(SundayObserver.lk) - The investigation into a suspected Navy abduction for ransom racket has led to explosive revelations in court and allegations against military top brass, and hope that justice will finally be served, but for families of the 11 youth abducted in September 2008, a decade long search has taken a heavy toll

The Naganathan residence on Shoe Road, Kotahena is dark and dreary. Inside, it is as though time has stood still for the once happy Naganathan family, since the abduction of their son, Rajiv Naganathan, almost 10 years ago by a suspected, organized Navy abduction for ransom gang. Since his disappearance, Rajiv's parents, especially, his mother Sarojini Naganathan has left no stone unturned in the search for her only child. Her only focus is the return of her child. Splitting her time between caring for her ailing husband and numerous court visits, Sarojini now spends most of her days at kovils and temples, praying for the return of her son, and inviting the fury of the Gods upon those who took him away from her. Before all this anguish (September 17, 2008, was the last time Sarojini saw her son) those were happier times. The International School educated Rajiv had just been accepted to a University in the United Kingdom and, had left home to spend time with friends before leaving Sri Lanka. The five friends including Rajiv went mysteriously missing that day, in Badowita, Dehiwala on their way to meet a man identified as Mohamed Ali Anwer, later revealed to be the informant of the

abductors. Recalling the day, Sarojini says, it was she herself that withdrew money for her son so he could treat his friends. She wavers between profound emotion when speaking of Rajiv, and shaking anger at the mere mention of his abductors.



Lt. Commander Chandana Prasad Hettiarachi, alias Navy Sampath

A lover of animals and cricket, Sarojini believes if allowed to continue his studies Rajiv would have become an asset to the country. For nearly two years after his abduction, Rajiv kept in touch through several phone calls taken from mobile phones belonging to Navy personnel sympathetic to the boy's plight. First held at Chaithya Road in a place locally known as 'Pittu Bambuwa' after his abduction, the group was later moved to the Trincomalee Naval Command to be held captive at the 'Gun Side' underground prison cells. After May 2011 the calls stopped. Sarojini never heard from her boy again. But, even a decade later her hope refuses to fade. Sarojini still believes her son is alive and



Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne



Who next???

being held somewhere. "For whatever reason maybe, they are afraid to release them," she says firmly. "We spend our lives just waiting for our child to be returned to us," she says. Rajiv Naganathan's fearless mother swore to fight for justice a long time ago, refusing to miss a single court date relating to her child's disappearance.

So, last Wednesday (29) true to her words, Sarojini was among the very few family members of the missing men in courts, while a complex investigation into the Navy abduction racket continues at the Colombo Fort Magistrate's Court. Following a long manhunt, the recently arrested Lt. Commander Chandana Prasad Hettiarachchi, alias Navy Sampath one of the main suspects of the case was presented before the Colombo Fort Magistrate with the Criminal Investigations Department (CID) telling the judge that the suspected ringleader of the abduction racket was not cooperating during interrogation. With 11 suspects of the abduction case already identified and nabbed, Navy Sampath's arrest marks a remarkable moment in the long drawn case. Colombo

Fort Magistrate Lanka Jayaratne on the day instructed the Gang Robbery Unit of the CID and its OIC Nishantha Silva to arrest the Current Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), Admiral Ravindra Wijegunaratne if they had sufficient evidence of his alleged involvement in allowing Hettiarachchi to flee overseas when the CID had an open warrant for his arrest. Giving instructions to the CID, the Magistrate said, the next necessary steps should be taken regarding Wijegunaratne, provided the CID has sufficient evidence to prove his connection. The former Commander of the Navy currently serves as the country's top defence official, and is due to retire tomorrow (3).

The announcement not only brought hope to the families of the missing in this case but to family members of those who disappeared during various periods in the country's history. While the country marked International Day of the Disappeared just two days after the case was heard, families of the disappeared expressed elation at the impending arrest. They said, after being unable to pursue any legal action against the abductors of their kith and kin, the announcement this week is a sign that the tide has finally changed. As Wijegunaratne now faces imminent arrest, the CID maintains that it has sufficient evidence to connect the CDS to the case and will, SEE P6

Lankans bring home the Carrom world title

(SundayTimes.lk) - The unsung heroes of Sri Lanka Sports, the National Carrom team made Sri Lanka's flag fly high at the 5th Carrom World Cup 2018 at



Sri Lanka skipper Chamil Cooray Chuncheon, South Korea, last week, when Sri Lanka's Men Slicers won the World Team championship. The Sri Lanka Men's team broke a

hoodoo in defeating the high riding Indians 2-1, to grab the Team Championship, while the Women Slicers failed to live up to their reputation, going down 3-0 to their Indian counterparts. Except for young Shaheed Hilmy's defeat, 4-time World champions India tasted defeat at the hands of a gallant Sri Lankan outfit led by Chamil Cooray and Nishantha Fernando. A jubilant Sri Lanka Men's team skipper speaking to the Sunday Times on arrival said that as a team they are very happy even with fewer facilities that they are able to win the world in carrom. He hoped that at the next Carrom World Cup in 2020 our slicers will repeat this performance. Sri Lanka will host the next Asian championship and he is confident that Sri Lanka would be able to defeat the Asian Giants India as they defeated them at the World Cup. It's not only the men, but also the women carromites made Sri Lanka feel proud by finishing first runner-up in the Women's championship behind India. Though Sri Lanka was expected to win the Doubles crown, the much touted Women Slicers were no match to the Indian Women, as they went down tamely 0-3 in the finals. Sri Lanka Women were represented by skipper Yasika Rahubadda, Joseph Roshita, Chalani Lakmali and Maduka Dilshani. In the 'Swiss League' where every Man



The slicers who made Sri Lanka proud at the 5th Carrom World Cup
Pix by Amila Gamage

and Woman player at the championship took part, reigning champion Chamil Cooray was beaten by 1 point, by Indian Woman player Kajal Kumari, in a close game. Though Sri Lanka has won five World Championships, this is the first time Sri Lanka won an event at the World Cup. In 2008 (France) and 2016 (England) the island nation won the Men's team events

and Chamil Cooray won the Swiss League. Nishantha Fernando emerged Men's Singles champion at the 6th World Carrom Championship held in Sri Lanka. In the 4th edition of the World Championship held in the Maldives, Chamil Cooray won the Swiss League. President of the Carrom Federation Parakrama Basnayaka said " before I took over office not a single... SEE P25

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