



MISSION STORIES

Bangladeshi peacekeepers celebrate Eid ul Fitr with their Ivorian hosts

After a month of fasting during Ramadan, most Muslims look forward to the Eid ul Fitr celebrations, which mark the beginning of the new Islamic Year. But for some of ONUCI's Bangladeshi peacekeepers based in Daloa in Sector West, it was time of apprehension. They were thousands of miles away from their families and friends and many of them were celebrating this important festival away from home for the very first time.

“I was worried because this is the first time I have spent Eid away from my family. I thought I would feel down and sad”, Captain Afzahul Rahman confessed. His words were echoed by his fellow officers in the Bangladeshi Engineering Company.

But on 3rd November, 2005, the group of elated officers were pleased to admit that their fears had been completely unfounded.

“We had such a wonderful time meeting the people distributing food to them and their response just made us feel even happier”, said Captain Shoful Azam.

After holding prayers in their colourfully decorated camp, the peacekeepers decided to venture into Daloa town to witness how the local muslims celebrate Eid.

“I was surprised to see everyone wearing new clothes just the way we do in Bangladesh for Eid . Everyone was smiling and greeting each other. It was wonderful. We had a very good time with the Ivorians”, explained Major Alimu Rahman.

The Bangladeshi Engineering Company Commander, Lt-Col Sharif Hussein explained that they were simply following the principles of Ramadan by sharing food and other gifts with their Ivorian hosts.

He further explained: “The theme of Ramadan is to share and abstain. Rich Muslims as well as poor Muslims have to go without food and water during the day, so everyone feels exactly the same. It also gives those who can always afford to eat some idea of what its like to go without food and drink. This is a good lesson for all of us”.



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