



MISSION STORIES

It's not only about silencing the guns

The Bangladeshi peacekeepers based in Zuenoula, like their counterparts elsewhere in Cote d'Ivoire, do not believe in limiting their activities to patrolling and monitoring the Zone of Confidence. Since their arrival in the western town more than ten months ago, they have worked tirelessly to help bring life back to normal in Zuenoula and surrounding villages.

Earlier this year they launched a clean-up campaign to rid the town of its numerous rubbish heaps. "We noticed that some of these mountains of rubbish had grown quite high and that they posed a health risk for the people," said Major Zaman Shawkat. "So we decided to do something about them." Over a period of four days in February this year, Banbatt I peacekeepers cleared the mounds of refuse from six sites around the town, much to the delight of residents who, in turn, stopped dumping garbage there.

The peacekeepers have just finished work work on a children's playground that surrounds an already-completed Bangladeshi Cultural Centre and Museum. They are planning to have an official opening of both in June 2005.

"We hope this will be our lasting legacy. During our stay here we have tried to learn all about the Ivorian people and their culture and our museum and cultural centre is our way of telling them a little bit about ourselves," Lieutenant-Colonel Tapan Mitra Chowdhury, Banbatt 1's second-in-command, explained.

But what has earned the most kudos for the Bangladeshis in Zuenoula is what they have done to improve security at the Sucreivoire sugar factory located some 30 kilometres from the town. Thanks to what Major Shawkat described as the "foolproof security system" they have set up, production has matched capacity at the factory for the first time in three years.

"We are very happy with the work that the Bangladeshis have been doing in Zuenoula, especially at Sucreivoire, which is now operating at full capacity," Deputy Mayor Doubi Bi Nene said. "The Bangladeshis have brought confidence and security to the area."



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