



Press Release

NEW YEAR BRINGS IN NEW FACES FOR INDIAN PEACEKEEPERS SERVING IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

Ebel-es-Saqi, Lebanon (22 December 2006) – Starting from tomorrow, a new batch of Indian peacekeepers is set to take over responsibility for the Ebel-es-Saqi area of operations as part of India’s contribution to the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

The Indian Battalion’s “4 Sikh Regiment” will start its rotation tomorrow and it will be replaced by the “15 Punjab Regiment.” The rotation process is expected to be completed on 29 December 2006.

Commanded by Col. Subhash Panwar, the “4 Sikh Regiment” has played an important role in the area over the past twelve months. In addition to carrying out the tasks assigned to UNIFIL peacekeepers under Security Council resolution 1701, the regiment organized a series of medical and veterinarian camps and provided other humanitarian assistance before and after the recent conflict.

The regiment’s medical team organized 14 medical clinics and six dental clinics in the regiment’s area of responsibility, treating a total of 11,200 medical patients and 1,850 dental patients. First aid boxes were regularly donated to several schools in the area and the peacekeepers helped a visiting medical team from India donate prosthetic limbs – known as the ‘Jaipur Foot’ – to 22 amputees from all over southern Lebanon.

In particular, the regiment’s veterinarian proved to be a much sought-after peacekeeper in the area – as well as one of the busiest as he was one of few veterinarians in southern Lebanon. During his one-year tenure, he treated nearly 54,000 animals – 7,500 of them injured during the recent war – with medicine provided by the Indian Government.

During the July-August conflict, the peacekeepers from “4 Sikh Regiment” rescued civilians stranded by the fighting and also organized emergency mobile clinics to treat wounded civilians. After the war, they organized several “Quick Impact Projects” for school children, helped recover damaged civilian vehicles, and helped provide water to local villages.

“In its time here, ‘4 Sikh Regiment’ has really felt itself to be a part of the community, and not just through its immediate work but also in a social sense with our peacekeepers taking part in activities like basketball and football matches with local players such as the Mine Survivors team of the Lebanese Welfare Association for Handicapped,” said Col. Panwar ahead of the regiment’s departure.

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