

'Mukti Bahini' now operating from Indian soil

# Pak troops in full control of Northern region

**LALMANIRHAT (Rangpur)** May 1:—The members of the so-called 'Mukti Bahini' who have had a tremendous thrashing at the hands of the hard hitting and swift-moving Pakistan Army columns in the far northern region of East Pakistan in Lalmanirhat, have started operating from across the border under the shadow of the Indian guns, writes APP's Special Correspondent Altaf Yawar.

In a despatch after visiting the area he says: Pakistan troops are in full control of the region right up to Moghul hat railway terminus near the Pakistan-Indian boundary line. Obsessed by the presence of the Pakistan troops the ousted 'Bahini' men break the otherwise calm atmosphere by occasional gunfire but to no avail at all.

During my day-long stay in Lalmanirhat I did not come across a single 'engagement' between the two sides at

though Indian propaganda machine is persistently blaring out cock-and-bull stories about the area.

But I did come across here signs left by Indian infiltrators under whose guidance the 'Bahini' people had been active here until they were thrown out lock stock and barrel. During my meetings with a cross section of the inhabitants of Lalmanirhat town, which has a population of about 30,000, I came to know that during their stay in Pakistani territory the Indian infiltrators had been making quite a fool of the so-called Bahini fighters. In return for Indian made cigarettes and match boxes the intruders had been taking away to Indian territory huge quantities of foodgrains from godowns. I myself saw empty packets of cigarettes & match boxes of India littered in the Lalmanirhat area. In fact some unused cigarette packs and match boxes left by the

Indians in a hurry while retreating were still in use by the residents of Lalmanirhat.

## Lalmonirhat town normal

The normalcy in Lalmonirhat town could be gauged from the fact that during my stay at the Lalmanirhat railway station, which is only six miles from Indian border, I saw movement of passenger and cargo trains in different directions. The canteen at the station was open and serving all sorts of refreshments. I and many outsiders present at the station had our lunch and afternoon tea at the canteen. While walking in the streets of the town I saw normal life going on. Shops were open and traffic on the move.

During one hour train journey from Lalmanirhat to Rangpur, I saw rural life at its full swing. Fields were

being ploughed and standing crops being weeded out of wild growth by large groups of peasants. Bullock carts, the major mode of transportation in the rural areas, were seen moving on the kacha roads and pathways amidst lush green fields. Village women were assisting their men folk in the fields or doing house chores in their bamboo huts.

## Bridge renamed after Army officer

Another noteworthy feature of the rail journey was the multi-spanned Tista rail bridge which has been renamed after a Pakistan Army officer Ijaz Murtafa Syed who laid down his life while protecting it from Indian infiltrators and saboteurs of the 'Mukti Bahini'.

Like the Ijaz Bridge the name of the Lalmanirhat airfield has also been changed to Ijaz airfield.