

Peace prevails at Rangpur

RANGPUR, May 5:—The district town of Rangpur, about 200 miles north-west of East Pakistan, has started pulsating with life again after the Pakistan Army wiped out the miscreants and anti-state elements from the area, writes APP's special correspondent Shaukat Kamal.

After touring the far north areas of East Pakistan the correspondent says in a despatch, 'I was struck by the peaceful atmosphere and normal life in the town.

"One of the cinema houses was regularly showing the

"Ladla" and "Nasib Apna Apna" movies. Shops were open and the town gave full evidence of normal activity."

'I visited a number of offices including the Collectorate, Municipality, District Council, etc. and saw people busy in their routine work.

"I was told in these offices that attendance was over 90 per cent and this figure was no mere claim as I saw almost all desks occupied by the officials."

Since the formation of 51-member committee for the restoration and peace and con-

fidence in the town life had fast returned to normal. The members of the committee had organised smaller ward committees and had spread out their peace activities to the nearby areas in the district.

"At the Municipal Committee Office the Sub-Divisional Officer Mr. Khondkar Shariful Islam told me that the committee had recovered Rs. 30 thousand in taxes in April. The committee's budget is only rupees nine lakhs."

The Secretary of the District Council Mr. Manzur Ahmad
(Continued on page 6 Col. 3)

Rangpur

(Continued from page 1)

said that most of his 450 staff members had reported on duty and more than half of this year's development budget had been utilised".

"The means of communication in the district was also rapidly improving. Buses, taxis and wagons are regularly plying from Rangpur to Saidpur, Bogra Gaibandha and Pirogacha and other areas around it. Trains had also started between Lalmanirhat and Rangpur; Purbatipur and Dinajpur and Purbatipur and Saidpur.

"The members of the peace committee in Rangpur also invited me to attend one of their regular meetings at which they were devising ways and means of maintaining peace and to frustrate the designs of the Indian infiltrators and anti-state elements. The peace committee is also exhorting the people not to give any heed to rumour-mongers."

"I was told at the meeting that volunteers were helping the Pakistan Army at various check-points in and around the town with a view not to allow any anti-state elements to enter the town and play with the life and property of the innocent people."

"A heartening fact that I noticed was that the residents of the district were helping Pakistan Army in fully restoring the means of communications.

The Katakhal Bridge on Dacca-Rangpur Trunk Road in Govindganj police station was damaged by the Indian infiltrators and anti-state elements. But thousands of people helped Pakistan Army in building an improvised bridge on the Katakhal River in three days to restore communications.

"One member of the peace committee said that Rangpur was determined to protect the ideology and integrity of Pakistan and to crush the Indian designs at all costs."

"Mr. Sirajul Islam, a former member of the National Assembly asked me to convey the goodwishes of the people of Rangpur to their brethren in West Pakistan."

"Another peace committee member suggested that books written by anti-Pakistan elements should be completely banned and destroyed in East Pakistan.

"Some residents of the town showed me the shops and houses that were set on fire and looted on April 3 by the anti-state elements. They told me that unity among the people of Rangpur saved the town from destruction at the hands of anti-state elements."

"I also drove to the Carmichael College on the outskirts of Rangpur town and found it intact. All-India Radio had persistently put out baseless stories about the college that it had been razed to the ground by Pakistan Army."

"I did not see a single bullet mark or any other sign of destruction not only to the sprawling college building but to any of its numerous hostels and other blocks."

"The college, about half-century old, is spread over an area of 300 acres and has over 2000 students on its rolls. It is among the oldest and premier educational institutions in East Pakistan.