Pakistanis rally to sheik's call

From Australian Associated Press

NEW DELHI, March 28.—East Pakistan's rag-tag rebel army is fighting for its life, facing superior West Pakistan troops backed by tanks, artillery and jet bombers.

* An Indian news agency report said an estimated 10,000 East Pakistanis had been killed in less than two days of civil war.

Each side claimed to have the upper hand.

Supporters of the East Pakistan leader, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, today formed a provisional government under the temporary leadership of Major Zia Khan.

A rebel radio, announcing the new Government, identified Zia Khan as head of the liberation army of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Awami League.

The radio statement explained why Sheikh Mujibur had not been appointed leader of the Government.

At the same time, the radio announced that a rebel force was marching in Chittagong to Dacca a distance of 132 miles.

Radio Pakistan claimed that Sheikh Mujibur had been arrested at his home in Dacca on Friday.

But a speaker identifying himself as Sheikh Mujibur spoke on a rebel radio broadcast that he was free and in the 'liberated' port of Chittagong.

The official Government radio said rebel troops were in full control of the situation throughout East Pakistan and that life 'is fast returning to normal'—but the rebel radio claimed most of the province was under their control.

Reports reaching Indian towns along the East Pakistan border said heavy fighting was continuing and that the paramilitary East Pakistan Rifles and police had joined the rebels.

Amid conflicting claims, Indian news agencies reported the only independent source of information from East Pakistan, following the expulsion of 35 foreign correspondents from Dacca, that the rebels had countered tough resistance from "liberation army" fighters.

The rebels wore sarongs and pyajamas, and many of them were armed only with sticks, knives and axes.

Hospital bombed

The Press Trust of India reported that West Pakistani troops were shelling and burning homes and factories as they retreated after "liberation army" advances.

Air force bombers had destroyed a hospital in Dacca, West Pakistan, and killed 12 patients, the agency said. Air force jets had also bombed the town of Comilla, 50 miles east of Dacca, near the Indian border.

The agency said that more than 10,000 people had been killed in two days of fighting since Sheikh Mujibur Rahman declared Pakistan's independence from the central Government and President Yahya Khan declared a state of war against the rebels in East Pakistan.

Most of the deaths occurred yesterday when the rebels attacked several Army posts in Dacca, Chittagong, Comilla, Khulna, Rangpur, Khulna and Jessor.

The agency said that 15,000 Government machine-gunners and 3,000 artillerymen had fired at rebel positions in Dacca.

In CANBERRA, the Department of Foreign Affairs has ordered the evacuation of the families of Australian Government officials in East Pakistan.

There are 28 Australians, including 20 expatriate missionaries, in East Pakistan.

Mr. Brian H. Coley, managing director of 'Costermil Stores,' Ltd, in the Combined Grounds, said the company would not operate the plant, which was under military control.

Mr. Coley said that the plant was closed today and that all Europeans had been evacuated on the request of the military authorities.

It was a weekend of death

Peter won the hearts of racegoers by riding three winners against some of Australia's top jockeys.

Valve, winner of the opening race, the Helific Handicap, gave Peter his first city winner in 16 months of riding.

For the young jockey from Port Fairy, in the Western District, it was a day 'that every apprentice dreams about.'

Before yesterday the best he could manage was two minor placings, and a race driver was passed by about 600 riders in the city, mostly on outsiders.

Peter, who had gained the past year either at Kilmore or the Melbourne suburb of Ringwood, had never ridden a winner in any of his first two races.

Peter, who was riding in the Melbourne Cup, rode three winners in the city, including a 10-year-old filly named "Rocket."