a tribunal with a High Court judge as the head under the International (Crimes) Tribunal Act 1973. It should also pass a law in the parliament making war crime denial a crime-- Germany has already outlawed holocaust denial, many European countries also have such laws.

The matter of the JI, NI, ML and other such organisations, participation in the war crimes as a political entity has to be probed. Democracy allows freedom of speech and movement; having said that, a democratic society needs to build its own mechanism to safeguard itself from those who want to destroy the very foundation on which it stands. Democracy will not take a firm footing in our country if the criminals who committed the worst crimes against humanity, not to mention, against the people of our country remain free.

It is heartening to see the government has barred the suspected war criminals from travelling abroad. Transparency, respect for human rights and rule of law should be our guiding principles in dealing with the war criminals.

There are some, small in number though, who believe that the trial of war criminals will breed extremism in the country, as they see the JI is the 'biggest moderate Islamic party' in the country. This analysis runs the risk of equating Bangladesh's socio-political conditions with that of Pakistan's. Unlike Pakistan, the JI in Bangladesh, as the last elections have proven, does not wield a mass support base, and the party does not work as a buffer between extremism and democracy. Bangladesh has an unofficial two-party system, when it comes to the elections or lending their political support, Bangladeshis have voted for two major political parties: in the general elections, the JI has never bagged more than 8 percent of total votes cast. The party has always become a distant fourth after Gen HM Ershad's Jatya Party. In fact, the trial of the war criminals will be a chance for the JI to clean its rank of its tainted past. As a new beginning, the JI should drop war criminals from its leadership and swear allegiance to Bangladesh and everything the country stands for.

The government should start the trial as soon as it can. The crime that has been committed against this nation and its people in 1971 must not go unpunished. The blood of the martyrs is crying out for justice, we have ignored it for 37 long years; history will not forgive us if we fail this time. ■



No problem of visa for Soviet citizens

Free treatment for political leaders

Cement supply

Absconding Al-Badr gangster

By A Staff Correspondent

Chowdhury Mainuddin, a member of the banned fanatic Jamaat-Islami Party, has been described as the "Operation In Charge" of the killing of intellectuals in Dacca, by Abdul Khaleque, a captured ring leader of the Al-Badr and office bearer of the Jamaat-e-Islami. The fascist Al-Badr forces are responsible for the killing of the intellectuals backed by the Pakistan Army before their humiliating surrender.

Chowdhury Mainuddin has been absconding presumably since December 16

Collaborators arrested

Outside powers behind killing of intellectuals

By A Staff Correspondent

Announc

Eastern News A
Banned By Former
ernment Resumes N
ing With Immedi
Staff Members Are
Report For Duty.
The District
Are Also Requested
Despatches Regular
We Have Alrea
Links With Tass An
With Other Foreign

Judge of any High Court or Supreme court which at any time was in existence in the territory of

Bangladesh or who is qualified to be a member of General Court Martial under any service law of

Bangladesh may be appointed as a Chairman or member of a Tribunal.

(3) The permanent seat of a Tribunal shall be in Dacca.

Provided that a Tribunal may hold its sittings as such other place or places as it deems fit.

(4) If any member of a Tribunal dies or is, due to illness or any other reason, unable to continue to perform his functions, the Government may, by notification in the official Gazette, declare the office of such member to be vacant and appoint thereto another person qualified to hold the office.

(5) If, in the course of a trial, any one of the members of a Tribunal is, for any reason, unable to attend any sitting thereof, the trial may continue before the other members.

(6) A Tribunal shall not, merely by reason of any change in its membership or the absence of any member thereof from any sitting, be bound to recall and re-hear any witness who has already given any evidence and may act on the evidence already given of produced before it.

(7) If, upon any matter requiring the decision of a Tribunal, there is a difference of opinion among its members, the opinion of the majority shall prevail and the decision of the Tribunal shall be expressed in terms of the views of the majority.

(8) Neither the constitution of a Tribunal nor the appointment of its Chairman or members shall be challenged by the prosecution or by the accused persons of their counsel. ■