



The Appellate Division, which raised war crimes convict Abdul Quader Molla's life sentence to a death penalty, has rejected his petition to review the ruling.

The ruling paves the way for execution the Jamaat-e-Islami Assistant Secretary General convicted for crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War."There are no further obstacles to implement the verdict as the review (petition) has been dismissed," explained Attorney General Mahbubey Alam while speaking to reporters on Thursday. The defence counsel, however, said the execution had to wait until the full copy of the ruling was available."The government will do whatever it needs to do after the full verdict is out and according to the jail code," barrister Abdur Razzaq told the media after the hearing. He said he thought everything had to wait until the full verdict came in."Whatever needs to be done has to be according to the jail code."Cheers of pro-ruling party lawyers and slogans of the procession taken out by agitated Jamaat-e-Islami-supporting lawyers at the Supreme Court premises following the ruling reverberated the court premises. Processions were taken out from the Ganajagaran Mancha at the capital's Shahbagh, hailing the Supreme Court's decision. Awami League supporters also took out procession at the city's Gulistan and Phulbaria. The International Crimes Tribunal - 2 had sentenced Molla on Feb 5 to life in prison for his crimes against humanity during the 1971 Liberation War. Upon an appeal from both the prosecution and defence, the Appellate Division raised that sentence to the maximum penalty on Sep 17. Molla was to be hanged a minute after midnight on Tuesday but his defence counsels managed to have it deferred through the chamber judge only hours before midnight. Molla's lawyers filed a plea to review the death sentence the same day. The following day, a full bench of the Appellate Division started hearing on the 'maintainability' of the petition to review the ruling for maximum punishment. The court also had put on hold of the execution until further notice before adjourning the hearing until Thursday. At the beginning of Thursday's hearing at 9:20am, Molla's counsel Barrister Abdur Razzaq began arguing for 'maintainability' of the review plea. Later,

Chief Justice Md Muzammel Hossain, who led the bench, asked Razzaq to present arguments concerning the merit of the review petition. The defence counsel pleaded that without a ruling on whether the petition was 'maintainable' or not, the hearing on the review petition could not possibly start. The court said: "We are not saying that the review is not maintainable. We will not go into an argument if you say it's 'maintainable'." "We are giving you the opportunity for a hearing on merit. Present your grounds on it." The defence counsel then went on to present his arguments over the merit of the petition, drawing counter-arguments from Attorney General Mahbubey Alam.

The judges left the court after the hearing that lasted until 11:50am, including a 30-minute recess from 11am. The ruling that dismissed the petition came just after ten minutes. Security was shored up in and around the Supreme Court on Thursday. Huge number of RAB and Police were seen at the court premises. Anyone entering the court was thoroughly searched by the security forces. It was Quader Molla's smiling photograph flashing a victory sign that had sparked off a vigil of tens of thousands at Shahbagh that came to be known as the Ganajagaran Mancha, dubbed as 'Bangla Spring' by western media. The month-long campaign demanded maximum penalty for war crimes convicts.