Bangladesh sentences five men to death for gang rape

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Agency Reporter  
  
A Bangladeshi court has given five men the death penalty for the gang rape of a minor girl in the central district of Tangail eight years ago, officials said on Thursday.  
  
The specialised Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunal handed down the sentence after the defendants were found guilty of raping the 15-year old girl in January 2012, prosecutor Nasimul Akhter told reporters outside the court building.  
  
This was the first such verdict after Bangladesh raised the punishment for rape to death from life in prison on Tuesday in the wake of nationwide protests against the rising number of sexual assaults.  
  
The protests erupted last week after reports that a gang had stripped and sexually assaulted a woman in a remote southern village, and then shared a video of the crime on social media.  
  
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In Thursday’s verdict, the court also fined each of the convicts 100,000 taka (1,180 dollars), Akhter said, adding that an arrest warrant was issued for three of the convicts who absconded.  
  
Two of the defendants were present in the dock when the verdict was pronounced, police officer Tanvir Ahmed said.  
  
He said the girl, a madrassa or religious school student, was gang-raped near a riverside jungle two days after she was abducted by a man little known to her on Jan.15, 2012, from the Bhuapur sub-district of Tangail, nearly 100km north-west of the capital Dhaka.  
  
Police arrested five people in connection with the rape as the girl filed a case with the local police station, the officer said, adding that the three on the run were released on bail during the trial.  
  
(dpa/NAN)