

Bill on death penalty for child rape to be tabled

Ravi Shankar PrasadR_V_Moorthy

The Bill to award the death penalty for those convicted of raping girls below the age of 12 will be introduced in the monsoon session of Parliament, the Cabinet decided on Wednesday.

The decision was taken at a meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said.

The Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill, 2018, once approved by Parliament, will replace the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance promulgated on April 21 following an outcry over the rape and murder of a minor girl at Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir and the rape of a woman at Unnao in Uttar Pradesh.

The Cabinet gave its approval to the draft Bill prepared by the Home Ministry, Mr. Prasad said.

The Bill stipulates stringent punishment for perpetrators of rape, particularly of girls below 12.

A provision for the death penalty has been provided for rapists of girls aged under 12, an official said.

Longer term

The minimum punishment in the case of rape of women has been increased from rigorous imprisonment of seven years to 10.

Under the Bill, in case of the rape of a girl aged under 16 and above 12, the minimum punishment has been increased from 10 years to 20.

The punishment for gang rape of a girl aged below 16 and above 12 will be imprisonment for the rest of life of the convict, the official said.

Correcting an anomaly

While punishments for crimes against girls was enhanced through amendment to the IPC, there was no mention of crimes against boys. The government will seek to correct that anomaly as well.

“POCSO amendment for enhanced punishment for sexual assaults on young boys has been approved by the Law Ministry. It will be sent to the Cabinet in two or three days,” said a spokesperson of the Women and Child Development Ministry.

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