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DCs given power, adoption bottlenecks eased

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THE Union Cabinet chaired by PM Narendra Modi on Wednesday approved a key change in the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015 to authorise deputy commissioners/district magistrates to validate adoptions.

The decision is meant to address the rather slow in-country adoptions in India, as hun-

dreds of prospective parents are forced to wait for years to adopt orphaned or abandoned children. As of now, prospective adoptive parents are required to go to civil or family courts to get the final go-ahead after all formalities are over.

However, with pendency high in civil and family courts, it is not easy to get a date for hearing, said officials in the Central Adoption Re-

source Agency.

Government figures show that 2,160 adoptions took place in 2020-21, but officials said about 1,000 adoption cases are pending in courts at any given time. "Though the JJ law mandates that courts have to dispose of adoption cases within two months from the date of filing of application, it rarely happens," said an official. "The latest amendment

will clear these hindrances."

As per the norms, orphaned and abandoned children are required to be declared legally free for adoption within two months in the case of a child up to the age of two years and within four months in case of a child above the age of two years, after following due procedure. Further, surrendered children are required to be declared legally free for adoption after two months from surrender date.