

# Rly to set up short stay homes for children in need

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian railways would set up short stay homes at railway stations for children found on its premises and in need of immediate care and protection. As a pilot project, such shelters and help desks will be set up at or adjacent to railway stations in Delhi, Danapur, Guwahati, Samastipur and Ahmedabad.

The 2,000 sq feet shelter home would be able to accommodate around 25 children and provide nutrition, psycho-social and medical aid. It would be "used as a transit in restoring the children with their families" in accordance with the Juvenile Justice Act and the POCSO (Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences) Act.

The board's decision comes days after railways issued standard operating procedures in collaboration with the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights for its staff on child protection. The national transporter has been holding workshops across zones on how to deal with vulnerable children.

The railway women welfare organisation will be in charge of the project and will sign a memorandum of understanding with child centric NGOs to be nominated by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, said a railway board notification.

Concerned zonal railways have been asked to allot the required space at these five railway stations. The short stay homes will consist of a 1,000 sq feet dormitory, a 75 sq ft sick room, a 125 sq ft store room, two toilets and two bathrooms, it said. A 500 sq ft office will be given to the person in charge of the shelter.

Railways will provide a caretaker to guard the shelter, which will be built either on the station premises or in a railway owned infrastructure nearby. According to data, around 35,000 children, who had either left home on their own or were trafficked, were rescued from railway stations or trains in the last four years. In Delhi alone, 820 trafficked children were rescued from railway stations between January and May this year.