

and to totally avoid placement on duty for 24 hours of railway employees at level crossing is not permissible; *Nishatganj Vyapar Mandal v. State of U.P.*, AIR 1994 All 84.

20. Power of Central Government to give directions for safety
Notwithstanding anything contained in any other law, the Central Government may, if it is of the opinion that any work undertaken or may be undertaken, is likely to alter or impede the natural course of water flow or cause an increase in the volume of such flow endangering any cutting, embankment or other work on a railway, issue directions in writing to any person, officer or authority responsible for such work to close, regulate or prohibit that work.

CHAPTER IVA

LAND ACQUISITION FOR A SPECIAL RAILWAY PROJECT

20A. Power to acquire land, etc.—(1) Where the Central Government is satisfied that for a public purpose any land is required for execution of a special railway project, it may, by notification, declare its intention to acquire such land.

(2) Every notification under sub-section (1), shall give a brief description of the land and of the special railway project for which the land is intended to be acquired.

(3) The State Government or the Union territory, as the case may be, shall for the purposes of this section, provide the details of the land records to the competent authority, whenever required.

(4) The competent authority shall cause the substance of the notification to be published in two local newspapers, one of which shall be in a vernacular language.

20B. Power to enter for survey, etc.—On the issue of a notification under sub-section (1) of section 20A, it shall be lawful for any person, authorised by the competent authority in this behalf, to—

- make any inspection, survey, measurement, valuation or enquiry;
- take levels;
- dig or bore into sub-soil;
- set out boundaries and intended lines of work;
- mark such levels, boundaries and lines placing marks and cutting trenches; or
- do such other acts or things as may be considered necessary by the competent authority.

20C. Evaluation of damages during survey, measurement, etc.—The damages caused while carrying out works on land such as survey, digging or boring sub-soil, marking boundaries or cutting trenches or clearing away any standing crop, fence or forest or doing such other acts or things which may cause damages while acting under section 20B particularly relating to land which is excluded from acquisition proceeding, shall be evaluated and compensation shall be paid to the persons having interest in that land, within six months from the completion of the said works.

20D. Hearing of objections, etc.—(1) Any person interested in the land may, within a period of thirty days from the date of publication of the notification

1. Chapter IVA (containing sections 20A to 20P) ins. by Act 11 of 2008, sec. 3 (w.r.e.f. 31-1-2008).

under sub-section (1) of section 20A, object to the acquisition of land for the purpose mentioned in that sub-section.

(2) Every objection under sub-section (1), shall be made to the competent authority in writing, and shall set out the grounds thereof and the competent authority shall give the objector an opportunity of being heard, either in person or by a legal practitioner, and may, after hearing all such objections and after making such further enquiry, if any, as the competent authority thinks necessary, by order, either allow or disallow the objections.

Explanation.—For the purposes of this sub-section, "legal practitioner" has the same meaning as in clause (i) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Advocates Act, 1961 (25 of 1961).

(3) Any order made by the competent authority under sub-section (2) shall be final.

20E. Declaration of acquisition.—(1) Where no objection under sub-section (1) of section 20D has been made to the competent authority within the period specified therein or where the competent authority has disallowed the objections under sub-section (2) of that section, the competent authority shall, as soon as may be, submit a report accordingly to the Central Government and on receipt of such report, the Central Government shall declare, by notification, that the land should be acquired for the purpose mentioned in sub-section (1) of section 20A.

(2) On the publication of the declaration under sub-section (1), the land shall vest absolutely in the Central Government free from all encumbrances.

(3) Where in respect of any land, a notification has been published under sub-section (1) of section 20A for its acquisition, but no declaration under sub-section (1) of this section has been published within a period of one year from the date of publication of that notification, the said notification shall cease to have any effect:

Provided that in computing the said period of one year, the period during which any action or proceedings to be taken in pursuance of the notification issued under sub-section (1) of section 20A is stayed by an order of a court shall be excluded.

(4) A declaration made by the Central Government under sub-section (1) shall not be called in question in any court or by any other authority.

20F. Determination of amount payable at compensation.—(1) Where any land is acquired under this Act, there shall be paid an amount which shall be determined by an order of the competent authority.

(2) The competent authority shall make an award under this section within a period of one year from the date of the publication of the declaration and if no award is made within that period, the entire proceedings for the acquisition of the land shall lapse:

Provided that the competent authority may, after the expiry of the period of limitation, if he is satisfied that the delay has been caused due to unavoidable circumstances, and for the reasons to be recorded in writing, he may make the award within an extended period of six months: