

(c) what are the steps taken for the rehabilitation and proper compensation to the people?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) The information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House in due course.

**Environmental clearance for exploration of coal and
diamond in Chhattisgarh**

651. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether environmental clearance was given for some companies to explore coal and diamond in Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh;

(b) whether Government is aware that this is a scheduled district; and

(c) whether all the tribals of the district are opposing this project and if so, what are Government's views over the exploration project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) No project for exploration of coal and diamond in Jashpur district of Chhattisgarh has been granted environmental clearance because prospecting and exploration projects do not come within the purview of the Environmental Impact Assessment Notification 2006 and its subsequent amendments.

(b) and (c) Do not arise in view of reply to part (a) above.

Protection of elephants

†652. SHRI JAI PRAKASH: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether after declaring the elephant as national heritage animal, Government proposes to take the step at the same level for its protection as being taken to save tigers; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The National Elephant Conservation Authority is being set up on the lines of the National Tiger Conservation Authority to provide same level of protection to elephants also.

Clearance to POSCO project

653. SHRI D. RAJA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken any decision on the issue of granting clearance to the proposed POSCO project in Orissa;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.