

# Panel to study impact of mining and core sector projects on tigers

Our Political Bureau

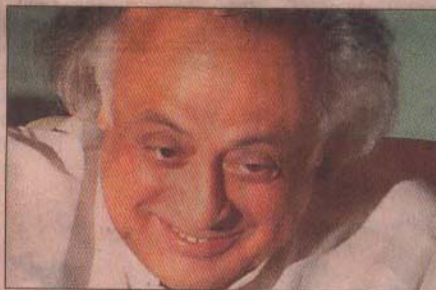
NEW DELHI

THE environment ministry has formed a panel to examine the impact of 17 projects, relating to mining and infrastructure development, on conservation of tiger.

The four-member committee of former National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) chief P K Sen and NTCA members Prakash Murlidhar Amte, Samar Singh and Urmila Pingle will submit its report within a month.

"The proposals include mining, infrastructure developments and industries projects falling in the buffer and corridor areas of tiger reserves in Tadoba landscape, Bandhavgarh landscape, Kanha landscape, Kanha-Pench corridor and Satpura-Pench corridor of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh," said NTCA DIG S P Yadav.

Seven of the projects are in the Chindwara district, which is represented by roads minister Kamal Nath. These projects, which are mostly in the mining sector, came up for environmental clearance in April. The committee is expected to examine the proposals in terms of its impact on tiger conservation and submit its recommenda-



**THE PROTECTOR:** Jairam Ramesh

tion based on which clearance will be given.

Among the projects that will have to await clearance is the Mandla Underground project of Jaiprakash Associates in Chindwara, four coal mine projects of the Western Coalfields Ltd also in Chindwara. There are two coal-based thermal projects in the Umaria district, a 300 MW coal based project in Chandrapur and a

1800 MW thermal power project in Katni will also be studied by this committee before clearance is given.

Environment minister Jairam Ramesh has on several occasions made it clear that his ministry would not okay projects that would adversely impact natural reserves and the environment. Mr Ramesh has stressed that his job was to implement the Environment Protection Act, 1986; the Forest Conservation Act, 1980, and the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972, in a "transparent and professional" manner.