(c) whether Italian trade team proposed to set up joint venture projects in India;

(d) if so, the details of the proposals submitted by the trade team; and

(e) the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI RAMKRISHNA HEGDE) : (a) to (e) No, Sir. However, since Italian Prime Minister's official visit to India in April, 1997 had been postponed, a 5-member delegation of Italian businessmen industrialists headed by the Coordinator, Asia-Oceanic Countries, Ministry of Foreign Affairs paid a visit to India from April 20-24, 1997 and had meetings with the Director General of CII in New Delhi. It is understood that the businessmen had meetings with Indian companies but no Joint Ventures/cooperation projects were concluded.

Economic Package for Uttar Pradesh

2503. SHRI ADITYANATH : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have conducted any latest survey in various parts of the country to study the regional economic disparity of a particular region;

(b) if so, the position of eastern Uttar Pradesh in comparison to other parts of the country, particularly in Uttar Pradesh;

(c) whether the above region is economically backward and the Government is formulating any special scheme to extend any economic package to the eastern region of Uttar Pradesh; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI YASHWANT SINHA) : (a) No.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) The Planning Commission allocates funds to the State for its overall development. The Government attaches high priority to development of backward areas and disadvantaged sections of Society and instructions to this effect have been given to State Government from time to time. However, the development of different regions within the State is primarily the responsibility of the State Government. As development requirement of Eastern Uttar Pradesh can be met within Development Plan of the State, it is not considered necessary for the Union Government to form a Special Package for Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

Visit India Year

2504. SHRI SHANKER PRASAD JAISWAL : Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have announced its new tourism policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the idea of the Government behind the proposal of "Visit India Year";

(d) whether the Government propose to develop the pilgrimages as the tourist spots to promote tourism industry; and

(e) if so, the details of the scheme prepared by the Government of Varanasi?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM (SHRI OMAK APANG) : (a) No Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) The objective of the proposal is to give focus and wider publicity to the Indian tourism product in the overseas markets and to attract more tourists.

(d) Yes, Sir. Pilgrim Centers with tourism potential are identified for development.

(e) The Ministry of Tourism has provided assistance to the State Government for the implementation of the following projects at Varanasi during last five years:

	Amount Sanctioned
1. Public conveniences at Varanasi	6.72
2. Flood lighting of Varanasi Ghats	16.50

MSCCF's against NTC

2505. SHRI MOHAN RAWALE : Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether some amount of the Maharashtra State Cooperative Cotton Federation is outstanding against the National Textile Corporation (NTC);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for non-payment of this amount;

(d) whether the Government of Maharashtra have made for several requests to the Union Government in this regard;

(e) if so, the details thereof and the reaction of the Union Government thereto; and

(f) the time by which this amount is likely to be paid to the Maharashtra State Cooperative Cotton Federation?

The MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI KASHIRAM RANA): (a) and (b) An amount of Rs. 136.72 crores is outstanding against NTC towards cotton dues to Maharashtra State Cooperative Cotton Federation as on 31.3.1998.