Rajasthan urged to separate audit, accounts: INDIA'S FOREIGN TRADE
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Rajasthan urged to separate audit, accounts

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JAIPUR, December 30: The Rajasthan government has been urged to separate accounts from audit as recommended by a task force set up by the Union government in 1976. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India has written several letters to the state government on this issue.

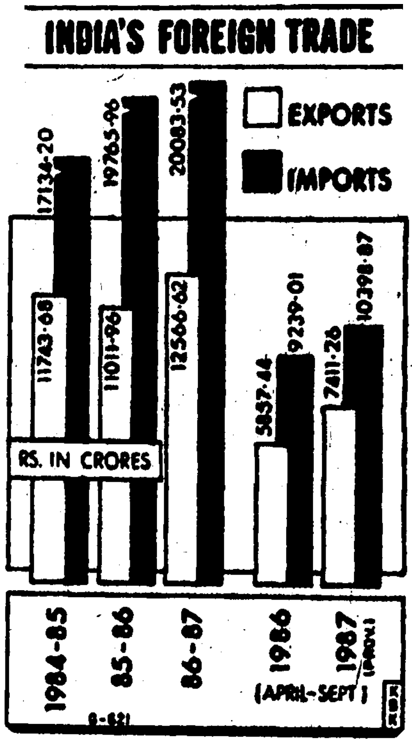
Although in 1976, the Central government took over the maintenance of the accounts of the Union government from the comptroller and the auditor general and introduced the system of departmental pay and accounts offices in Rajasthan, the separation of accounts from audit has not taken place as yet.

The task force had said it would not be prudent to dispense with the state treasury system. However, it had recommended that the treasuries be converted into district pay and accounts offices with more functions.

According to Mr S. L. Ajmera, president of the Rajasthan Accounts Service Association, under the present system, the state government remained unaware of its expenditure under different heads as the finance and appropriation accounts of the state were prepared by the accountant-general which is usually two to three years behind schedule. Citing an example, he said in the budget estimates of 1987-88, expenditure under detailed heads was not shown for 1985-86 as the finance accounts had not yet been printed.

Even the state accounts, which has to be prepared monthly, is late by about 10 months.

This glaring "absurdity" was among the issues considered by the members of the state accounts service association at a meeting held here on Sunday. The meeting was attended by over 200 accounts and treasury officers, directors of finance and financial advisors.



ARCHAIC SYSTEM

The meeting said the "archaic system" can be rectified only by separating accounts from audit which will mean decentralisation of work. At present, the entire maintenance of state government accounts as well as audit, rests with the Comptroller and Auditor General of India. A single agency is unable to cope with the massive responsibility. Even in the 1935 Government of India Act, it had been provided that each state have its own auditor-general or accountant general.

It felt that the maintenance and compilation of accounts and its audit by the same agency amounted to violation of the basic financial principles. It pointed out that while the basic purpose of appointing accounts officers in various departments of the government was to bring in financial discipline and regularise expenditure, they discharged only an "advisory" role actually. They were never directly involved in the accounts and finance work of their departments.