

Terrorists ambush Army truck in J&K, 4 soldiers, 1 cop killed

Patrol Vehicle Attacked With Grenades & Guns

Sanjay Khajuria | TNN

Jammu: Four soldiers, including a junior commissioned officer (JCO), and a J&K police constable were killed Monday in a terrorist ambush on a military patrol truck in the remote village of Badnota in Kathua district. Six other soldiers were wounded in the attack, which marks a month of escalating terror-related violence in the Jammu division, beginning with four attacks on June 9, 11, and 12.

The ambush pattern resembled previous attacks on military convoys in Jammu, including an ambush on two IAF vehicles on May 4 in Poonch district that resulted in the death of Corporal Vikky Pahade. Last year, similar attacks in Poonch and Rajouri

7 ATTACKS IN A MONTH ALL IN JAMMU

July 8: JCO, 3 jawans & a cop killed in attack on Army truck in Badnota, 120km from Kathua district HQ

July 7: Guards repulse attack near military camp in Manjakot, Rajouri district; **1 soldier wounded**

June 26: **3 terrorists killed** in Gandoh-Bhaderwah sector, Doda district

June 12: Twin attacks in Doda district:



5 soldiers, SPO wounded in Chattergala mountain pass checkpoint; search team attacked in Gandoh, cop wounded

June 11: A CRPF constable from MP, two suspected Pakistani terrorists **killed** in Seda Sohal, Hiranagar, Kathua district

June 9: Attack on a pilgrim bus in Teryath, Reasi district; **9 dead**

districts on Dec 21 and Nov 22 claimed the lives of nine soldiers, including two captains.

Monday's ambush is the second major terror attack in Kathua this year, after a June 11 shootout at Seda Sohal village in Hiranagar left a CRPF constable and two suspected

Pakistani terrorists dead.

According to a security source, the attack occurred around 3:30pm on Machedi-Kindli-Malhar road near Badnota in Lohai Malhar, approximately 120km from Kathua district headquarters and 230km from Jammu city. "An Army

truck was on routine patrol when it came under attack with grenades and heavy gunfire," the source said.

The wounded men were shifted to a sub-district hospital in Billawer, while two soldiers with critical bullet wounds were taken to a military hospital. Names of the slain soldiers weren't disclosed till the filing of this report.

Following the ambush, the terrorists fled into nearby forests. Reinforcements were dispatched, and a search operation is underway for the attackers, believed to be three heavily armed men who recently entered the Jammu region from Pakistan. Officials said the route used by the terrorists was likely a conduit into the hinterland from across the border.

Combined teams of Army, J&K police, and paramilitary personnel are pursuing the terrorists in the dense jungle and mountainous terrain.

► **Related report, P 10**

India added 4.7cr jobs in FY24; 6% growth double of previous yr: RBI data

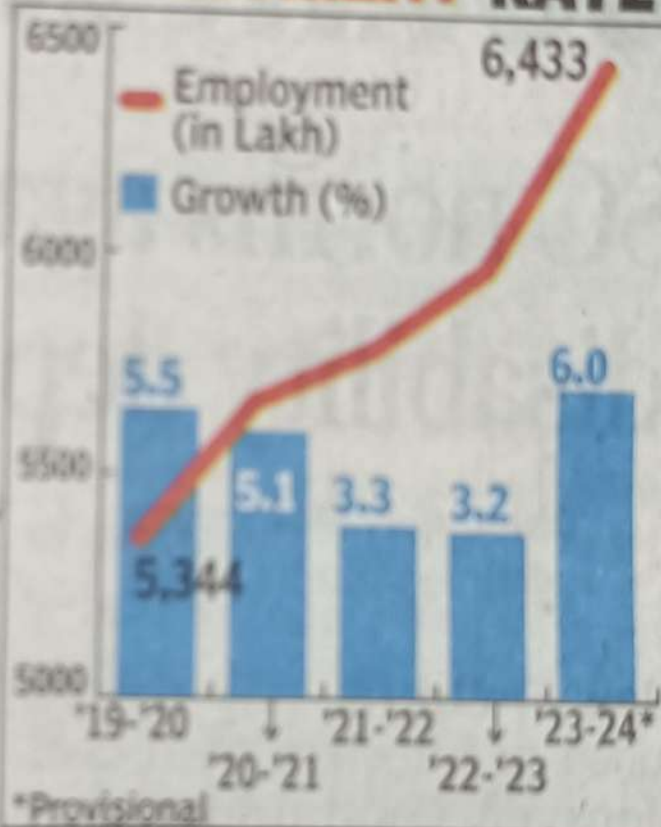
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: India added nearly 4.7 crore jobs in the 2023-24 fiscal year, a Reserve Bank of India report showed on Monday, higher than several other estimates.

Employment growth rate was estimated at 6% in 2023-24, higher than the 3.2% recorded in 2022-23, according to the report, which measures industry productivity and employment. This is the first time that RBI has tried to extrapolate a provisional estimate of productivity for fiscal year 2023-24, using available numbers.

The central bank has issued provisional numbers in its report, which aims to measure productivity across 27 industries that are aggregated to form six broad sectors, including agriculture, hun-

EMPLOYMENT RATE



ting, forestry and fishing, mining and quarrying, manufacturing, electricity, gas and water supply, construction and services. The KLEMS database was constructed using numbers compiled from NSO, NSSO, ASI and other sources.

► **Related report, P 7**

75 yrs of **India-Austria** diplomatic ties

Modi first PM to visit Austria in 41 years

NEW DELHI, July 8 (PTI)

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi's upcoming visit to Austria will be the first prime ministerial visit from India to that country in 41 years, the last being of Indira Gandhi in 1983.

Modi's official visit on July 9-10 comes when India and Austria mark 75 years of their diplomatic relations.

Jawaharlal Nehru travelled to Austria in 1955 in the first prime ministerial visit since diplomatic ties were established in 1949.

"India and Austria have had a regular exchange of visits including at the level of leaders, ministers and parliamentarians highlighting the importance that both countries accord to further strengthening their relations," according to a profile of

Nehru visited in 1955; Indira in 1983

India-Austria bilateral relations put up on the website of the Ministry of External Affairs.

It also shares the history of PM-level and President-level visits from India to Austria.

Then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi visited Austria in 1971 which was followed by the visit of then Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky in 1980. Gandhi's visit in 1983 was followed by the visit of then Chancellor Fred Sinowatz in 1984, it said.

Gandhi was in Vienna from June 16-18 during her 1983 visit, people familiar with the matter said.

While there have been no prime ministerial visits from India since Indira Gandhi's visit, there have been President-level visits to the country. The then President K R Narayanan visited Austria in 1999; then President Heinz Fischer visited in 2005; then Austrian Vice Chancellor Josef Proll in 2010; and then President Pratibha Devisingh Patil in 2011, according to the profile on the MEA website. Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra on Friday briefed media about Prime Minister Modi's upcoming tour to Russia and Austria from July 8-10.

The Prime Minister will pay an official visit to Moscow on July 8-9 at the invitation of Russian President Vladimir Putin for the 22nd India-Russia Annual Summit.

In the second leg of the trip, Modi will be visiting Austria on July 9-10 at the invitation of the Chancellor of Austria.

WORLD POWERS must help Russia, Ukraine resume direct talks: Xi

BEIJING, July 8 (AP)

CHINESE President Xi Jinping called on world powers to help Russia and Ukraine resume direct dialogue and negotiations during a meeting on Monday with Hungary's Prime Minister Viktor Orbán.

Orbán made a surprise visit to China after similar trips last week to Russia and Ukraine to discuss prospects for a peaceful settlement in Ukraine. Orbán praised China's "constructive and important initiatives" for achieving peace. Besides Russia and Ukraine, the end of the war "depends on the decision of three world powers, US, EU and China," Orbán wrote.

NATO summit hosted by Biden to back Ukraine

WASHINGTON, July 8 (PTI)

THE NATO summit, being hosted by US President Joe Biden here this week, is likely to show a strong demonstration of America and its allies' support for Ukraine and make significant new announcements to increase military, political and financial support for the European country, in addition to holding a meeting with the EU and Indo-Pacific partners to deepen their cooperation, according to administration officials.

The NATO summit will be the first to include Sweden as a member of the alliance. Sweden officially joined the alliance in March.

The historic summit would

also mark the 75th anniversary of the founding of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), which is now a strong military alliance of 32 countries.

"It has been truly indispensable to Euro-Atlantic security, deterring threats to the United States and our allies," a senior administration official told reporters ahead of the summit.

Being held in the American capital, within days of Prime Minister Narendra Modi having a summit meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, the NATO summit, officials said, "will send a strong signal to Putin that if he thinks he can outlast the coalition of countries supporting Ukraine, he is dead wrong."

'Centre must target 4.9% fiscal deficit in 2024'

NEW DELHI, July 8 (ANI)

THE GOVERNMENT under Prime Minister Narendra Modi should focus on adherence to fiscal prudence and continue on the fiscal consolidation path, suggested SBI Research ahead of the much-awaited full Budget for 2024-25 to be tabled on July 23 - the first Budget under Modi 3.0.

The difference between total revenue and total expenditure of the government is termed as fiscal deficit. It is an indication of

the total borrowings that may be needed by the government. SBI Research suggested that the government should target a fiscal deficit of 4.9 per cent, but it must not obsess too much over the fiscal stance.

The government intends to bring the fiscal deficit below 4.5 per cent of GDP by the financial year 2025-26.

In the Interim Budget ear-

lier this year, the government has targeted a fiscal deficit

of 5.1 per cent of GDP for 2024-25. However, on the back of a stupendous growth in GST revenues along with

higher dividends from PSUs and RBI, SBI Research believes that government may budget fiscal deficit of less than 5 per cent -- maybe 4.9 -- for 2024-25. "As the budgeted fiscal

deficit gets lowered, gross market borrowing of the government will also reduce to around Rs 13.5 lakh crore in FY25 compared to Rs 14.1 lakh crore in the interim budget and net market borrowing to Rs 11.1 lakh crore against Rs 11.8 lakh crore earlier," the SBI Research report, authored and led by Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Adviser, SBI, said. "This along with India's inclusion in Global Bond indices will keep the yield curve movements anchored," it added.



'India to play supportive role for peaceful region'



Prime Minister Narendra Modi welcomed by Russian President Vladimir Putin at his official residence at Novo-Ogaryovo for a private engagement, in Moscow, Russia, on Monday. (PTI)

■ President Putin hosts Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his official residence at Novo-Ogaryovo for a 'private engagement'

MOSCOW, July 8 (PTI)

IN HIS first trip since the start of Moscow's invasion of Ukraine, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday travelled to Russia to hold summit talks with President Vladimir Putin -- a visit that is being seen as having a wider geopolitical context and signalling.

Shortly after landing in Moscow, Modi said he is looking forward to deepening bilateral partnership in futuristic areas and that stronger ties between India and Russia will "greatly benefit our people".

India seeks to play a "supportive role" for a peaceful and stable region, the Prime Minister said in his departure statement.

Earlier, the Indian Ambassador to Russia Vinay

Kumar expressing confidence said that the talks will yield "tangible outcomes" in many areas. Speaking to PTI Videos on Modi's visit, Kumar said that extensive dialogue on trade, economic and investment cooperation and connectivity will be a key focus of discussions during Modi's visit.

Modi was received at the Vnukovo-II airport by Russia's First Deputy Prime Minister Denis Manturov. The Russian first Deputy Minister also accompanied the Indian Prime Minister to his hotel from the airport, officials said.

Manturov had received Chinese President Xi Jinping during his visit to Russia as well. On Tuesday, Modi will co-chair the 22nd India-Russia annual summit with President Putin, interact with the members of the Indian community and visit the Rosatom pavilion at an exhibition.

The Prime Minister is also scheduled to lay a wreath at the 'Tomb of the Unknown Soldier'.

(Contd on page 5)

PM expected to seek Indians' release from Russian army

'Looking Forward To Reviewing Ties With Friend Putin'

► Continued from P 1

Ahead of leaving for Moscow, PM Modi said he's looking forward to sharing perspectives on various regional and global issues; and that India seeks to play a supportive role for a peaceful and stable region. Like China, India never explicitly condemned Russia's actions in Ukraine.

While backing dialogue and diplomacy for enduring peace, India has also maintained that any such process must involve both the parties. The last annual summit took place in 2021 when Putin visited India. The two did meet though on the margins of the SCO summit in Samarkand in 2022, where Modi famously told Putin this isn't the era of war. He's expected to convey a similar message on this occasion too, in line with India's emphasis on dialogue and diplomacy as the only realistic way of resolving the conflict.

Modi will co-chair the summit on Tuesday with Putin and also interact with the members of In-



PM Modi was received by Russia's first deputy PM Denis Manturov, who Indian officials said is senior to the deputy PM who received Chinese Prez Xi during his visit to Moscow

dian community in Moscow. In his meeting with Putin, Modi is expected to also seek the release of Indian men fighting for the Russian army in the Ukraine war. Putin hosted Modi at his private residence in Novo-Ogaryovo, a Moscow suburb.

"The Special and Privileged Strategic Partnership between India and Russia has advanced over

the past 10 years, including in the areas of energy, security, trade, investment, health, education, culture, tourism and people-to-people exchanges," said Modi, adding he's looking forward to reviewing all aspects of bilateral cooperation with his "friend" Putin.

In a post on X, Modi also said stronger ties between our nations will greatly benefit people of both countries. The PM, who is visiting Russia for the first time in five years, was received by first deputy PM of Russia, Denis Manturov. Indian officials said Manturov is senior to the deputy PM who received Chinese President during his visit to Russia. Manturov also accompanied Modi to the hotel from the airport in the same car.

About his visit to Austria starting late on Tuesday, the first by an Indian PM in 41 years, Modi said he's looking forward to discussions to take the partnership to even greater heights in new and emerging areas of innovation, technology and sustainable development among others.