

FOR JEM, BALAKOT WAS A 'SAFE' CAMP

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Hundreds of Jaish-e-Mohammad *fidayeen* and their trainers were shifted from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to a well-equipped resort- style camp in a hilltop forest in Balakot after the Pulwama attack, providing Indian forces with “a sitting duck target” when they carried out the air strike early on Tuesday, sources said.

Everyone at the camp was sleeping and Pakistani defence establishment had no clue that the attack was coming so deep into their country because they had expected a surgical strike on camps closer to the Line of Control, said the sources.

However, India had received intelligence that JeM had shifted many in-training terrorists and hardcore operatives, along with their trainers, to the Balakot camp, which has facilities for 500 to 700 people along with cooks and cleaners, and even includes a swimming pool.

Fighters and other aircraft took off from several air bases in Western and Central commands at about the same time, leaving Pakistani defence officials confused on the target, the sources said. A small group broke away and headed to Balakot where “the sleeping terrorists were sitting ducks,” said the source.

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