

Spice of the Matter



A former Mirage 2000 pilot himself, Sameer Joshi takes forensic clues to analyse technical efficacy of the Indian Air Force's use of Spice 2000 smart bombs to target Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad's (JeM) terror camp at Jaba Hill top, Balakot on 26 February 2019

At around 0330 hrs on 26 February 2019, Mirage 2000s of the Indian Air Force made shallow incursions inside Pakistan occupied Kashmir (POK) and targeted JeM camps at Muzaffarabad, Chakoti in POK and Balakot in Pakistan itself. The strike on the Markaz Syed Ahmad Shaheed madrassa complex located on Jaba hill top at Balakot was the most significant amongst them, especially considering that the Indian Air Force had struck a target inside Pakistan for the first time since the 1971 war. The strikes were a direct response to the attack by Pakistan-based terror proxy Jaish-e-Mohammad, on a CRPF convoy at Pulwama in the Kashmir Valley on 14 February where over 40 Indian jawans had lost their lives.

According to reliable sources, the IAF used the Israeli-origin made SPICE 2000 stand-off glide bomb to target the camp at



Representative photo of IAF Mirage 2000TH before a night sortie (Angad Singh)

Balakot. The SPICE 2000 is a glide bomb kit, fitted on a 2000 lb (907 kg) bomb, the IAF using both SPICE 1000 and 2000 kits. As per Indian Air Force sources, 5 x SPICE 2000s were utilised for targets at Balakot, while one bomb was brought back. These bombs fell within 2 metres of their designated mean points of impact (DMPI) in the targeted area. The Indian Air Force has publicly stated that it has synthetic image radar (SAR) imagery of the post-strike battle damage analysis, which confirms its claim that all targets were accurately hit.

Predictably Pakistan denied any damage or casualties at Balakot and said the IAF payloads had impacted in the