Sunjuwan Attack – the Lessons to be Learnt

What is the issue?

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- The Sunjuwan Army base attack in Jammu has once again highlighted the weaknesses in our border installations.
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- India has been facing successive attacks on its critical high security defence posts despite being on high alert.
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How did the event unfold?

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- The garrison of the 36 Brigade of Jammu and Kashmir Light Infantry was attacked last Saturday by three heavily armed terrorists.
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- They managed to enter the residential quarters of soldiers and killed 6 personals and 1 civilian and injuring many before being neutralised.
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- This is the latest in a series of recent attacks on military posts, all of which were followed by an enquiry commission to identify lapses.
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- But the situation remained the same since Pathankot attack in Jan 2016, which was followed by major attacks in Uri, Handwara, Nagrota and Panzgam.
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What are the governmental actions taken?

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- In the aftermath of Pathankot, a security audit was done across all military bases in the country and recommendations were given.

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- Recently, the Defence Ministry sanctioned Rs. 1,487 crores to strengthen sensitive installations as per the recommendations of this audit.
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- Also, the government has delegated substantial financial powers to the three services to strengthen perimeter security at bases.
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- While these moves are welcome, the implementation must be broad-based, and go beyond mere ad hoc measures.
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What are the challenges?

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- Recognizing that a successful terror attack does not necessarily mean that the soldier on the ground was lax in performing his duties is important.
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- Notably, many bases along the border are located in tough terrain, and are in close proximity to civilian dwellings.
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- These demand care from the soldier to avoid civilian casualties in crossfire while adhering to the standard operating procedures.
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- Also, despite its technologically advanced military, India still relies heavily on putting more boots on the ground and on the calibre of the infantry.
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- It is imperative to change this narrative and adopted a holistic approach, by making sure that the soldier is fully backed by sufficient technology.
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Source: The Hindu

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