

Slow pace of Swat reconstruction flayed

Our correspondent

MINGORA: Speakers at a jirga expressed concern over the slow pace of reconstruction activities in Swat and asked the government to expedite work on rebuilding the infrastructure damaged as a result of militancy and last summer's devastating floods.

Local elders, members of the civil society and public representatives of Swat-Kohistan from Bahrain, Kalam, Utror, Mankiyal, Balakot, Bishigram and Madyan addressed the event jointly organised by Idara Baraye Taleem-o-Taraqi (IBT), Bahrain, Swat, in collaboration with the Centre for Research and Security Studies, Islamabad.

The speakers said the hitherto neglected infrastructure, particularly the damaged roads in the tourist destinations of Bahrain, Kalam, Utror, Ushu and Madyan was a stark example of government's incompetence. The government, they said, could not rebuild the road from Chirkri near Fatepur to Kalam even after eight months.

A former provincial minister Malik Mohammad Deedar said the elected representatives of the area were not doing enough to press the government to address the issues in Swat-Kohistan. He

said the lawmakers belonging to the flood-hit areas should highlight the problems being faced by the people in the provincial and national assemblies.

An elder Malik Khurshid said the non-governmental organisations should conduct proper assessment before initiating any project to avoid overlapping and waste of funds. He said roads and bridges should be reconstructed on priority basis to facilitate the locals besides attracting the tourists.

A social worker and educationist Khaista Gul shed light on the overall situation of education and said that even the Government High School in Bahrain destroyed in the 2005 earthquake could not be reconstructed.

He said over 30 percent of the primary schools in the area were non-functional due to lack of proper monitoring system. He said the Government Higher Secondary School in Mankiyal was virtually non-functional, as the teachers posted there always remained absent.

Zahir Shah of the IBT called for proper utilisation of natural resources and said that micro-power hydel generators should be installed for generating electricity to stop deforestation.