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## Overseas Pakistanis, Kashmiris Urged to Strengthen Role in National Progress Globally



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MIRPUR (AJK), Feb. 16 – Experts and leaders addressing the Overseas Kashmiris Convention 2026

in Mirpur emphasized the continued vital role of overseas Pakistanis and Kashmiris in national development and the promotion of the Kashmir cause on the global stage.

Federal Minister for Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, Engineer Amir Maqam, described the overseas community as a valuable national asset, noting that their remittances, amounting to billions of dollars annually, strengthen Pakistan's economy. He expressed gratitude for their support during crises, including earthquake relief, and hailed them as ambassadors of Pakistan abroad. Maqam also acknowledged the AJK government and Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore for recognizing the importance of overseas Kashmiris and hosting the high-profile convention. He highlighted federal government development projects in AJK, including five Daanish schools, a proposed university, and modern motorway projects connecting Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, and Mansehra. Condemning Indian atrocities in Indian-administered Kashmir, Maqam cited the demolition of over 200,000 homes and the killing and injuring of hundreds of thousands of innocent Kashmiris over seven decades, praising the resilience of the Kashmiri people. He added that Pakistan's resounding victory in last year's conflict has brought international attention to Kashmir.

Leader of the Opposition in the AJK Legislative Assembly, Shah Ghulam Qadir, welcomed the convention, underlining the overseas Kashmiris' pivotal role in regional development and praising democratic progress in AJK compared to Indian-occupied Kashmir. All Parties Hurriyat Conference convener, Ghulam Muhammad Safi, stressed that resolution of the Kashmir issue

must reflect the wishes of the Kashmiri people through a plebiscite, urging overseas Kashmiris to lobby internationally for the cause.

OPF Chairman Syed Qamar Raza described overseas Pakistanis and Kashmiris as the backbone of the national economy, highlighting government initiatives such as dedicated desks and complaint portals for overseas support. He emphasized expanding private sector investment to create jobs and prosperity. Overseas leaders, including Barrister Abid and Coordinator Azhar Bardalvi, praised the government and OPF for organizing the historic convention and proposed dedicated seats for overseas Kashmiris in the AJK Legislative Assembly to ensure their voices are heard.