

---

Firudin Gurbanov, Deputy Education Minister, school principals and representatives of the sports community attended the ceremony, organized by the Ministry of Education at secondary school no. 12 in Baku.

The main purpose of the festival is to strengthen the tendency and interest in chess among secondary school students, to increase the popularity of this sport, playing an important role in development of the cultural level, and to promote the essence of the first European Games, which will be held in Baku in June, among school children.

Speaking at the ceremony, Firudin Gurbanov, Deputy Education Minister, spoke about the work carried out within the framework of the "State Program on development of chess in Azerbaijan in 2009-2014", approved by the Decree of President Ilham Aliyev.

Firudin Gurbanov noted that now tens of thousands of school students study the mysteries of this intellectual game at 66 children-youth chess schools, subordinated to the Ministry of Education. Last year the students of children's and youth chess schools won 242 medals in republican competitions and 90 medals in international competitions. 15 of 22 international grand masters about the country, 7 of 14 masters of sport of the international category, 779 out of 100 Azerbaijani chess players included in the international and world rankings, are graduates of the chess schools which are directly functioning in an education system.

The deputy minister also mentioned that chess was included in the curriculum of secondary schools, according to the joint memorandum signed by the Ministry of Education, the World Chess Federation and the Azerbaijan Chess Federation. Now in the 2nd, 3rd and 4th classes, more than 500 secondary schools are teaching chess lessons.

It should be noted that the first stage of the competition was conducted among the pilot secondary schools, taught chess as a subject, and there were established the combined teams consisting of winner-students of district (city). More than 3 thousand students from 494 pilot schools, taught chess as a subject, participated in the competitions.

About 400 students will compete for the title of champion in the final race.

The trophies, diplomas and valuable prizes will be awarded to the teams, took 1st, 2nd, and 3rd places in Age Group and in a team score, and distinguished players will be awarded with the diploma by the Ministry of Education.