

---

Speaking at the opening of the ceremony, Education Minister Misir Mardanov noted that the development of physical education and sport as one of the important issues for the government, and achieved successes are results of care provided for athletes in the country. He underlined the attention and care provided by the national leader Heydar Aliyev for the development of sport and noted that this policy is successfully continued by President Ilham Aliyev.

Noting many memorable achievements were gained in the sporting life of Azerbaijan in 2011, Misir Mardanov stressed the special role of pupils of sport and chess schools operated under the Ministry of Education in obtaining these achievements. The Minister talked about measures implemented within the State Programs confirmed by Presidential orders on further development of chess and football and underlined that there were built and given to use new buildings for chess schools of Agjabedi, Guba, Khachmaz and Ujar districts in 2011.

According to him, in 2011 all chess schools were supplied with furniture, computers, computer hardware, technical education resources, other important equipments and visual aids. The minister also talked about ongoing measures to teach chess at secondary schools. He said that in 2011 pupils of chess schools have won 38 medals, including 14 gold, 11 silver and 13 bronze medals in republican championship and 5 gold, 3 silver and 2 bronze, overall, 10 medals in European and world championship.

The Minister listed the name of athletes, who have achieved good results in republican and international competitions, and schools that they represent, as well as expressed his belief that these achievements will be continued. Noting 159 sport schools have taken part in annual republican competition to evaluate the activity of children-youth sport and chess schools, coaches working at these schools as teachers, identify talented athletes and encourage them, the Minister congratulated the winners and wished them every success.

Next, the winners of republican competition held in 12 categories were awarded diplomas and prizes.

The ceremony was attended by Deputy Minister of Youth and Sport Ismayil Ismayilov, deputy chairman of State Committee for Family, Women and Children Affairs Aynur Sofiyeva, vice-president of Azerbaijan Chess Federation Faig Hasanov, MPs Rauf Aliyev, Ulvi Guliyev, heads, teachers and athletes of children – youth sport and chess schools.