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A ceremony was held at Gulistan palace on May 3 to award the winners of "Best presentation" contest, which marked the 94<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary of national leader Heydar Aliyev.

Prior to the ceremony, senior education officials visited the Alley of Honors to pay tribute to national leader Heydar Aliyev and lay flowers at his grave.

They also put flowers at the grave of prominent ophthalmologist, academician Zarifa Aliyeva.

Held among 9<sup>th</sup>-11<sup>th</sup> grade pupils of general education institutions, the contest was co-organized by the Ministry of Education, Heydar Aliyev Foundation, New Azerbaijan Party, Ministry of Transport, Communications and High Technologies, and Azerbaijan Education Workers Free Trade Unions Republican Committee.

Participants in the event included state officials, members of parliament, heads of educational institutions, education experts, teachers and pupils.

The ceremony started with the playing of the state anthem of the Republic of Azerbaijan.

In his remarks, Minister of Education Mikayil Jabbarov said national leader Heydar Aliyev always paid great attention to the development of education and highly appreciated the role of education in society and individual development. The minister said national leader Heydar Aliyev's ideas defined priorities of educational reforms in Azerbaijan, adding that "his recommendations lay at the heart of the basic program of the country's education system". Mikayil Jabbarov said that launched by the national leader, the important reforms have been successfully continued by President Ilham Aliyev over the past 14 years. He said that these years have seen the country's socio-economic progress and intellectual and spiritual development, and the establishment of an Azerbaijani model of development.

"The education philosophy of national leader Heydar Aliyev is yielding fruits and lies at the heart of success at all levels of education." The minister said that the reforms carried out in recent years aimed to train highly skilled young people with a new thinking and broad world view. "Our primary goal is to increase quality of education." Mikayil Jabbarov stressed the importance of raising patriotic youth and instilling the sense of self-consciousness and national pride in pupils.

Mikayil Jabbarov emphasized the role of the contest in encouraging young generation to study national leader Heydar Aliyev's rich political legacy, life and activities. The minister congratulated the winners and wished them success in their studies.

Deputy Prime Minister, deputy chair and executive secretary of the New Azerbaijan Party Ali Ahmadov hailed the contest's contribution to young people's study of national leader Heydar Aliyev's rich legacy and to the promotion of the ideology of Azerbaijanism among pupils.

Chairman of Azerbaijan Education Workers Free Trade Unions Republican Committee Sattar Mehbaliyev and department head at the Heydar Aliyev Foundation Soltan Mammadov stressed the importance of the contest in terms of preserving and promoting the legacy of national leader Heydar Aliyev among the young generation. They congratulated the winners of the contest.

The ceremony then featured performance of pupils of the Republican Arts Gymnasium.

According to results of "Best presentation" contest, five entries received 1st degree certificates, nine entries received 2nd degree certificates, 15 entries received 3rd degree certificates and 23 entries received certificates of merit. The winners also received valuable prizes.