



NEWSLETTER

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World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue Held in Azerbaijan

Initiated by the Government of Azerbaijan, a World Forum on Intercultural Dialogue was held on 7-9 April, 2011 in Baku, Azerbaijan. The Forum was supported by the Council of Europe, the North-South Centre, UNESCO, the UN Alliance of Civilizations, and ISESCO. Some 435 attendees from 20 countries, including ministers of culture and cultural ambassadors, representatives of international governmental and non-governmental organizations, parliamentarians, mayors, journalists, cultural experts and practitioners participated at the Forum. Addressing the Forum, President Ilham Aliyev of Azerbaijan said: "In all periods, all peoples have lived as one family in Azerbaijan and have been linked by bonds of friendship. We are very pleased that these positive tendencies have become even stronger at the time of Azerbaijan's development as an independent state". The speakers of the Forum expressed confidence such events would give impulse to establishing peace among the nations, solution of the global problems as well as to further development of relations among the states.

Discovery Science Channel: Baku Reinvents Image and Emerges as the World's Next Iconic City

On April 22-24, 2011 the Science Channel of Discovery Communications aired a new series of its program "Build it Bigger/Extreme Engineering" entitled "Azerbaijan's Amazing Transformation", featuring two extraordinary construction projects in Baku, Azerbaijan. In the program, its producer and host Daniel Forster goes behind the scenes of the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center and the Flame Towers - unique complexes currently under

construction in Azerbaijan's capital. "Determined to remake the Azeri identity, this 2000-year old oil-rich city is undertaking one of the most ambitious construction projects in history, spending \$6 billion a year on over 500 new developments to transform an area three times bigger than Manhattan in just 15 years," says Daniel Forster in the program. "They are starting with two of the most audacious projects – the world's first flame-shaped skyscrapers atop the highest point in the city, and the Heydar Aliyev Cultural Center, housing a museum, national library and 1200-seat performance hall, all under one flowing roof - unlike any in the world." Remembering the crucial moments of the struggle of Azerbaijani people for independence, the host notes: "The liberation of Azerbaijan from the Soviet Union was not a peaceful process. In 1990, a year before the fall of the USSR, hundreds of thousands of Azeris got together to protest for their independence. That night Soviet tanks rolled into the city and opened fire, killing 137 civilians... Now, 20 years later the country is celebrating its independence with a different kind of symbol, by building the tallest buildings in the entire region." "The idea is not just building monuments to Azeri history, but it is the idea of a place that can actually create a different Azeri future," concludes Daniel Forster.

Unique Oil Spa in CTV News

On April 25, 2011 CTV News featured a video report about Azerbaijan's Naftalan - a unique oil spa resort, which cures various skin and muscle diseases, including arthritis. Naftalan oil is used for therapeutic baths, known as balneotreatment. It was well-known centre during the Soviet times, but after independence the government had to host thousands refugees there as a result of Armenian aggression. However, recently, several spas were reopened and attract many patients.