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International Press Service

Ressort: Politik

National Press Day ? In Azerbaijan

The Netherlands, 22.07.2025 [ENA]

Every year on July 22, Azerbaijan celebrates National Press Day. This year marks the 150th anniversary of Azerbaijani national journalism. The history of the Azerbaijani press began with the publication of the first issue of the newspaper "?kinçi" on July 22, 1875, thanks to the efforts of the prominent educator Hasan bey Zardabi. "?kinçi" was the first newspaper published in the Azerbaijani language.

Although its publication did not last long, it laid the foundation of Azerbaijan’s national press.
In total, only 56 issues of the newspaper were published, with a monthly circulation of 300–400 copies, which was considered a significant number for the region at that time. Given that Tsarist Russia – which ruled Azerbaijan at the time – opposed the enlightenment of the Azerbaijani people and imposed strict censorship laws since 1865, the very existence of "?kinçi" carried special significance. Zardabi had applied for a publishing license as early as 1868, but only managed to receive approval in 1875.

Interestingly, the newspaper’s name was proposed by the governor of Baku, who suggested "?kinçi" (meaning “The Cultivator”) to create the impression that the newspaper would only focus on agriculture. However, Zardabi’s real goal was to educate and enlighten his nation. The newspaper initially featured four sections, later adding a letters section to include read-ers’ opinions and interests.
Hasan bey Zardabi’s mission was to serve his nation through education and knowledge. He was also among the founders of the Azerbaijani national theater. For him, progress meant science and education, not imitation of others. "?kinçi" became a crucial tool in advancing this vision.

The efforts of Hasan bey Zardabi and other intellectuals like him, aimed at educating and enlightening their nation, eventually bore fruit. It is no coincidence that in 1918, the first democratic republic in the Muslim East – the Azerbaijan Democratic Republic – was estab-lished.
Hasan bey Zardabi and the newspaper he founded, “?kinçi”, hold a special place in both the history of Azerbaijan and the history of Azerbaijani journalism. This is why July 22 is cele-brated every year in Azerbaijan with great respect and pride.

Bericht online lesen: https://mighty-images.en-a.eu/politik/national_press_day__in_azerbaijan_-91836/

Redaktion und Verantwortlichkeit:

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