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# JALIL MAMMADGULUZH

Playwright \ publicist, 1869-1932

**AZERBAIJANI LITERATURE**



Ministry of Culture and Tourism  
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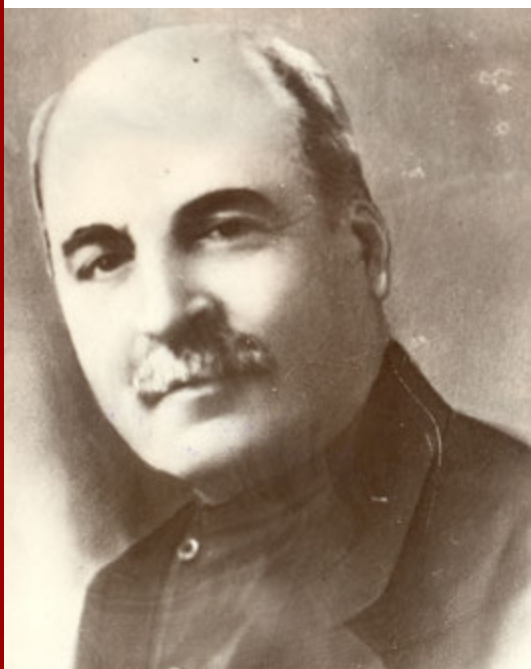
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## Jalil Mammadguluzade

Jalil Mammadguluzade is a great satirist, the founder and mover of famous “Molla Nasraddin” literary school, master of short stories, powerful playwright and publicist.

He was born on February 10, 1869 in Nakhchivan. He got his primary education in *mollakhana* (religious school), then at 3-years school in Nakchivan city. Having graduated from the Gory Pedagogical Seminary in

1887, he taught at rural schools of Ulukhanly of Erivan Governorate, Bash Norashen (Jalilkend village in present Sharur) and Nehram of Nakhchivan region in 1887-1897. As he noted, years of teaching served as a rich source for the future creativity of the writer.



*Jalil Mammadguluzade with his son Midhat, 1916*



*Jalil Mammadguluzade with Hamida khanum,  
their children and relatives*

His first printed work was the article published in "Caspi" newspaper in Baku on March 2, 1902. The allegorical verse drama "Tea Party", which he wrote in 1889 is his first play. He is the founder of the genre of allegorical verse drama in Azerbaijani literature with this play. He wrote a number of his short stories, the comedy play "Currant Game" and the story "The Stories of Danabash Village" in this years.

J.Mammadguluzade worked at the editorial office of *Shargi-Rus* newspaper having had been published since 1903. It should be noted that *Shargi-Rus* newspaper and his editor M.A.Shahtakhtly had a significant role in the maturation of J.Mammadguluzade as a writer and journalist. His stories "Post Box" and "Currant Game", as well as his translation "Labour, death and disease" first time were published in this newspaper.





*Heydar Aliyev, the nationwide leader of Azerbaijani people in front of the bust of Jalil Mammadguluzade*



*The cover of "Molla Nasraddin" published by Mirza Jalil in 1906*

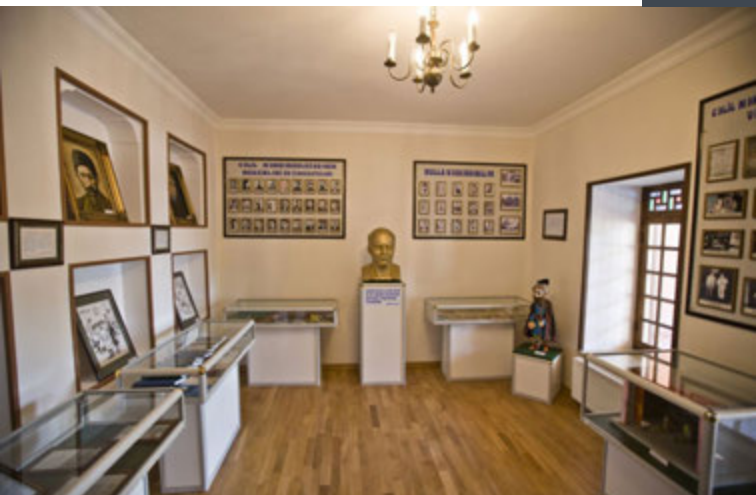




*The caricature of Mirza Jalil*

By publishing the first issue of *Molla Nasraddin* magazine on April 7, 1906 in Azerbaijan, Jalil Mammadguluzade laid the foundation of satirist journalism in the world of Turkish Muslim. He got in creative relations with writers and journalists such as Mirza Alakbar Sabir, Nariman Narimanov, Abdurrahim bey Hagverdiyev, Mammad Said Ordubadi, Omar Faik Nemanzadeh, Ali Nazmi, Aligulu Gamkusal exclusively through this magazine. The deep democracy and freedom ideas propagated by J.Mammadguluzade made the magazine nationwide and internationally popular. Czarist government frequently charged him, carried out search in *Geyrat* printing house, from time to time closed down publication of *Molla Nasraddin*.





*Mirza Jalil's home-museum*



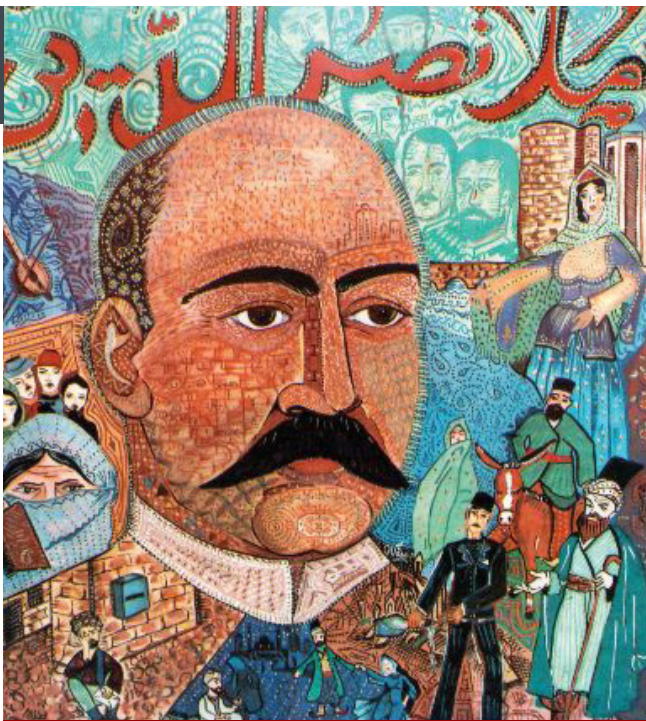


*Mirza Jalil at Isa Bulagi (spring) with his family*



*Mirza Jalil and his wife Hamida Khanum*





*Mirza Jalil's portrait with plot  
Painted by: Ulviyya Hamzayeva*

In June, 1920 J.Mammadguluzade moved to Tabriz with his family, in 1921 published 8 issues of *Molla Nasraddin*. The play "The Dead" was performed in Tabriz. In general, those years realistic-satirical literature and the press in South Azerbaijan developed, the caricature (cartoon) art significantly enhanced.

Jalil Mammadguluzade returned to Baku in 1922 continued to publish the magazine, at the same time worked in "Education and Culture", "Eastern Woman" and other press publications. Being the editor of "New Way" newspaper, he tried to introduce Latin alphabet. In 1926 he was accepted to the nomination of membership for the Central Executive Committee of Azerbaijan.



*A photo collage from "Window of Woe" movie about Jalil Mammadguluzade. 1986*





*The different issues of "Molla Nasraddin"  
published by Mirza Jalil*



*The piano of Munavvar khanum,  
Jalil Mammadguluzade's daughter*







*Home-museum of Jalil Mammadguluzade*

Jalil Mammadguluzade wrote his works in lyric, epic, dramatic genres both in prose and verse. His fiction was a new literary event in Azerbaijani literature. The national themes hold a special place among publicistic works of the writer. He used to sign with the pseudonym *Molla Nasraddin* in such type of works.

The major peculiarities of J.Mammadguluzade's literary heritage comprise the depiction of working people's destiny, call to national revival and renaissance, laconism, simple and original style. His short stories such as "Post Box" "Gurbanali bey", the comedy "The Dead", the dramas "Mother's Book", "The School of Danabash Village", "Madmen Assembly" occupy a special and honorable place in the realistic trend of Azerbaijani literature. His plays form quite new stage in the development of Azerbaijani drama. Unlike the dramatic comedies by M.F.Axundzadeh, Mirza Jalil's

comedies are tragicomedies, they are of tragic nature. The tragicomedy "The Dead" launches the shattering of gross darkness of ignorance in Azerbaijani literature. Having destroyed the moral captivity, superstition, ignorance, "The Dead" is work of genius in terms of its being as effective as an atomic bomb thrown in the struggle for salvation Azerbaijan and whole Turkish-Muslim world from ignorance and superstition.



*The student years of Jalil Mammadguluzade  
at the Gory Seminary.  
Alakbar Mammadkhanov, Jalil Mammadguluzade,  
Abulgasim Sultanov. Gory city, October 30, 1855*



*Jalil Mammadguluzade's personal kamancha*







*Jalil Mammadguluzade's diploma from  
Gory Seminary*

Having been exposed to strict ideological terror of soviet regime since 1928, the writer resigned from the position of editor-in-chief of *Molla Nasraddin* in 1931.

The great writer died on January 4, 1932 and was buried in Baku.



*The yard of Jalil Mammadguluzade's  
home museum in Nakhchivan*



*One of the exhibits of Mirza Jalil's home-museum:  
"Molla Nasraddin"*



His works were translated into many languages. A documentary and a feature film (“Window of Woe”) were shot about him, the comedy “The Dead” and dozens of short stories were filmed. The opera of “The Dead” was composed by V.Adigozalov. In 1967 a region and a city were named Jalilabad in honor of him. The Musical Drama Theatre of Nakhchivan and the Literature Museum of Nakhchivan were named after him. His monuments were built up in Nakhchivan and Jalilabad.



*Jalil Mammadguluzade's home-museum  
and his belongings*

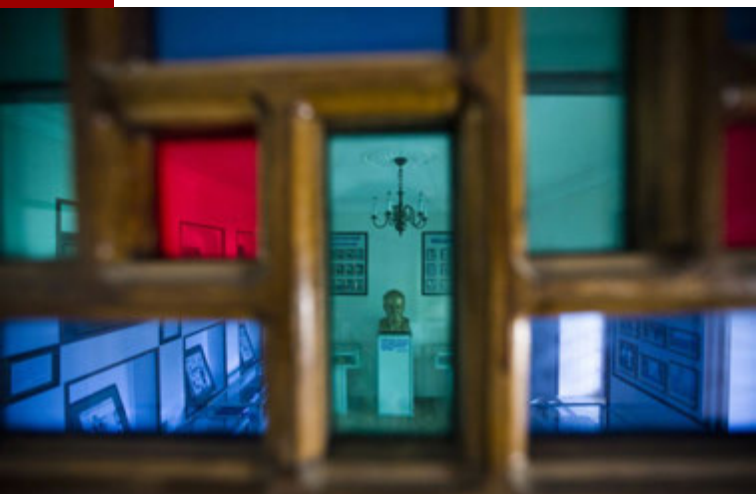
## *Appreciative statements about Jalil Mammadguluzade:*

*«The creativity of Jalil Mammadguluzade is a magnificent treasure demonstrating the morality, culture and literature of Azerbaijan to the world, as well as the power of our people. All the national peculiarities of Azerbaijan and universal values embodied in the creativity of Jalil Mammadguluzade are the basis of our national ideology and a great tool and resource for the creation of this ideology as well.»*

*Heydar Aliyev  
Nationwide Leader*



*Heydar Aliyev, the ex-president of Azerbaijan  
Republic in the home-museum  
of Jalil Mammadguluzade*



*The exposition is demonstrated about the creative activity of the great writer in his home-museum*

*"The launch of "Molla Nasraddin" in Azerbaijani Turkish [...] was the best and most effective one among satirical and humorous publications. In fact, the unprecedented magazine in the East highlighted the Iranian issues as well. "Suri-Israfil" and "Charand-Parand" publications of Iran got fully inspired by "Molla Nasraddin", wrote with its accent, style and impact."*

***M. Tarbiyat  
Outstanding Iranian Scientist***

*«The success of present Azerbaijani prose – novels and stories owes much to Jalil Mammadguluzade's short stories, on the whole, to the genre of short story. The formation of Azerbaijani prose today as a specific genre also owes to this little genre – «droplet» of literature.»*

*Elchin  
People's Writer*



*Hamida Khanum and her children are at  
Mirza Jalil's coffin*





Anvar Mammadguluzade, Mirza Jalil's son with his family: from the left in front Zofya, Irena Javanshiri, Anvar Mammadguluzadeh and Teymur Javanshiri. Behind from the left: Mizhar Sajavi



USSR post stamp on the occasion of Mirza Jalil's 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary





*"Jalil Mammadguluzade is the national pride of centuries-old Azerbaijani literature and an outstanding representative of the world literary culture".  
Isa Habibbayli, academician*







*Academician Isa Habibbayli meets with Mehri khanum Saggarziya. Paris, December 8, 1998*



*The books of and about Mirza Jalil are demonstrated in the home-museum.*





*Hamida khanum Mammadguluzade*  
1874-1955





*The intelligentsia of Nakhchivan Autonomous Republic is in front of Mirza Jalil's monument*



*A fragment from theatrical performance of "Mother's book" by Mirza Jalil*



## ☞ The Post Box ☞

"The Postbox" depicts the relationship between a landowner and Noruzali, a poor, ignorant peasant. Noruzali's highest priority is to please his Khan, even to the point of ridiculousness. Mammadguluzade is playing with broad stereotypes here: the self-absorbed Khan is only concerned about his own welfare (and amusement); the backward peasant is completely out of touch with modern amenities, including postboxes. It was the 12th day of November. The weather was cold, but it hadn't snowed yet. The doctor examined the Khan's ill wife. He said that she had improved and that it would be possible to start traveling in a week. The Khan was in a hurry to go to Yerevan because he had some very important business matters to attend to there. Also, he was afraid that it would snow and then it would be impossible for his wife to travel in the cold weather. He took up his pen and wrote to his friend Jafar Agha [Mr. Jafar. Pronounced ah-GHA]: "Next week I hope to arrive in Yerevan with my family. Could you please make sure that the rooms where we'll be staying are all warmed up and ready for us? Have the servants lay the rugs, light the stoves and air the rooms. I want to make sure everything will be comfortable for my wife, who is ill. Please reply by telegram. I have taken care of the matter that you asked about. Goodbye!

Sincerely,  
Vali Khan"

The Khan folded the letter into an envelope, addressed and stamped it. He intended to give it to his servant to drop in the postbox, but then remembered he had already sent him out on another errand. Just then he heard someone at the gate. The Khan went out and saw that it was Noruzali [pronounced no-ruz-a-LI] from the village of Itgapan. Noruzali often came to see him and always brought something such as flour, honey or butter. Again this time, Noruzali had not come empty-handed.

As soon as he saw the Khan, he set his walking

stick against the wall, started to open the gate and pushed the donkey with the load on its back inside. Then he took three to four chickens from off the donkey's back. He untied the load, placing a few sacks on the ground. Then he raised his eyes to look at the Khan and bowed low in greeting. "Why do you go to all this trouble, Noruzali?" "It's no trouble at all, my lord. I am your faithful servant until the day I die," the peasant replied, brushing the dust off his clothes. As it was nearly one o'clock in the afternoon when the mail would go out, the Khan asked, "Noruzali, do you know where the Post Office is?"

"I'm a villager, how would I know where the Post Office is?"

"Do you know where the Central Courthouse is?"

"Yes, my dear lord, of course I know where it is. I went there last week to complain to the Chief of the Courthouse because the mayor of our village is tormenting us. To tell you the truth, our mayor is originally from another village, and that's why he hates us. Last week two of my calves disappeared. So I went there..."

"Hold on. You can tell me the rest of the story later. Listen carefully, there's something I want to tell you. There's a building across the street from the Courthouse, and on the wall there's a box. That's the Postbox. It has a long, narrow lid. Go there, lift the lid, drop the letter inside and come back right away!"

Noruzali carefully took the letter. First he looked at the Khan, then he looked at the letter again with terrified eyes. He went towards the door and bent down to put the letter on the ground.

The Khan shouted, "Don't put it there! It'll get dirty. Go put it in the box right away and come back."

"Khan, my dear Khan, let me hang a bag of oats around the mule's neck. He's come a long way and he's probably tired and hungry."

"No, not now. It can wait a while. You'll miss the mail. You can feed him when you get back."

"All right. Then let me just tie him up. I'm afraid he'll eat all the trees in the yard if I leave him untethered."

"No, no. That's OK. Hurry! Go as fast as you

can! Go put the letter in the box and come back!"

Noruzali put the letter inside his jacket.

"My dear Khan, these chickens are still tied up. Poor animals, let me untie them and give them some grain."

Noruzali put his hand in his pocket to get some grain, but the Khan screamed even louder, "No, no! Later, after you've come back!" Noruzali took his walking stick and started to run like a little child. Then he remembered something else, turned and again pleaded with the Khan, "Khan, there are eggs in one of the sacks. Be careful with them. I'm afraid that the donkey will lie down on them and break them."

The Khan shouted even more loudly, "Stop talking! We're losing time."

Just as Noruzali was about to leave, the Khan called him back.

"Noruzali, don't give the letter to anyone. Don't show it to anyone. Put it in the box and come back right away! Understand?"

"I'm not a child! I'm not as inexperienced as you think. Don't worry, even the mayor wouldn't be able to take this letter away from me."

Noruzali disappeared after saying these words.

The Khan went back into the house and spoke tenderly to his wife, "Well, Light of my Eyes, start getting ready. I wrote a letter to Yerevan so that they'll warm up the rooms. We can go now. You're looking better now, thank God. The doctor says a change of climate will do you good."

As the Khan was speaking to his wife, his servant came in and said, "Khan, whose donkey is in the yard? Who brought those things?"

The Khan replied, "Put those things away! Noruzali brought them from Itgapan village."

The servant took the chickens and eggs to the kitchen and led the donkey off to the stable. Then he opened one of the sacks with flour, took a pinch of it and showed it to the Khan, "This is quality flour."

The Khan looked at the flour and told his servant to start baking the bread. Two hours later after he had finished eating the bread, the Khan remembered Noruzali and the letter. He summoned his servant, but was told that Noruzali had not come back yet. The Khan was

surprised that it was taking him so long. Perhaps Noruzali had put the letter in the postbox and then gone to the bazaar to buy something to eat. Another hour passed, but Noruzali didn't come back.

Finally the Khan called for his servant to go find out what had happened to him. Half an hour later, the servant returned saying that Noruzali was nowhere to be found.

The Khan went out on the balcony and lit a cigarette. He paced up and down the balcony wondering what had happened. Just then, a policeman dropped by. "Khan, the police chief wants you to come to the police station and bail out your village countryman. If you don't, the chief is going to put him in prison."

The Khan gazed at the man in astonishment. Then he replied, "That villager is such a meek person. What could he possibly have done to get arrested?"

"I don't know exactly what happened. It would be better if you went to the police station yourself."

The Khan got dressed and said nothing to his wife so as not to worry her. Before entering the police station, he looked inside the jail cell and saw Noruzali sitting in a corner along with the other prisoners. He was crying like a child, wiping his tears away with the hem of his chukha.

After the Khan found out what had happened and vouched for Noruzali, the two of them went back to the Khan's place. Noruzali gave some feed to his donkey, sat down against the wall and started crying again.

The Khan went into the house, lit a cigarette, went out on the balcony and called to Noruzali, "Now tell me what happened, Noruzali! Your story sounds very interesting. Someone could write a book about it. Tell me every detail. Start from the beginning when I gave you the letter, and tell me how you ended up in prison."

Noruzali got up and moved closer to the Khan and said, after wiping his tears on his coat, "My dear Khan, forgive me! I am not to blame. I'm just a poor, ignorant peasant from the village. How am I supposed to know about letters, postboxes and post offices? Forgive me, Khan, I beg you. Let me make up for all this trouble. There's no way to undo everything I've done. It must have been



God's will. Forgive me, Khan. I'll be your faithful servant until the day I die..."

Noruzali came closer and bent down to kiss the Khan's feet.

"Don't make such a big deal out of it, Noruzali. Am I accusing you of anything? Have you done anything wrong to me? So then why should I forgive you?"

"Ah, Khan, you don't know the half of it. That infidel, the son of an infidel took your letter, put it in his pocket and walked off with it. "Who put the letter in his pocket and went away?"

"That stranger, that Russian guy!"

"Where did he take it?"

"He went into that building you told me about, the one with the box in front. He went inside that building."

The Khan was silent for a moment.

"Didn't you put the letter inside the box?"

"Of course I did! That stranger opened the box somehow and took the letter out as soon as I put it in."

"Were there any other letters inside that box beside ours?"

"Yes, plenty of them. He stole them all."

The Khan started to laugh very loudly. "No, Noruzali, tell the whole story - everything from start to finish exactly as it happened, from start to finish."

"Khan, my dear Khan, I took the letter from you and went to the Central Courthouse building. I found the building you were telling me about and I also found the box. I opened its lid and wanted to put the letter inside it, but then I stopped. I looked at the letter first, then I looked at the box. To be honest, I was afraid that you would get angry with me. I didn't know what to do, whether to put the letter in or not, because I had forgotten to ask you if I should stay near the box after putting the letter in or if I should come back home. I thought, if I put it in and stayed near the box, then I would have to stay until evening.

But as you saw for yourself, my dear Khan, I left the poor donkey hungry and also left the chickens with their legs tied up. I brought some flour as well. And it's still here in the yard. Khan, let your servant and me take the sacks inside the house. I'm afraid that it will rain and the flour will

get wet."

"No, Noruzali, don't worry about them...Tell me, tell me, what's the rest of the story?"

"So I didn't put the letter in the box. I closed the lid and walked away for a little while. At first I wanted to come and ask you, but then I was scared that you would get angry with me. I was afraid that you'd say that Noruzali was like an animal, like a donkey, that doesn't understand anything. So I leaned against the wall to rest. Then I saw an Armenian boy, about this tall, about 12 or 13. He went up to the box, opened the lid, put a letter inside it exactly like the one you gave me, then closed the lid and went away. I called after him to ask why he put the letter in the box, but he didn't answer. I don't know-maybe he didn't understand me. Anyway he didn't look back.

"A few minutes later, a Russian lady rushed up to the box, put a letter in and left. This time I got brave. I thought to myself that this is probably the way it has to be, that the letters should stay in the box. So I got brave. Having said "bismillah," I went and opened the lid of the box, put the letter inside and turned around to come back to your service.

"When I was about this far from the box, that Russian guy went up to it. At first I thought that he wanted to put a letter inside the box, too. But then I saw that no, he wanted to do something else. He put his hand inside the box. I understood right away that he wanted to steal the letters...Khan, I'm speaking too much, forgive me, tell your servant to help me get on my way home, it's getting late."

"No, I won't let you go yet. Tell me what happened after that."

"Well, my dear Khan, may my children be your servants! May I never live another day without your blessing! Well, I saw this guy taking the letters out of the box. He closed the lid and was about to leave. I ran over to him and made him stop. I said, 'Hey you, where are you taking those letters? You think people put their letters in there for you to steal them? Put them back! Noruzali isn't dead yet, and he won't let you steal a letter his Khan gave him. Don't take something that doesn't belong to you. Don't your Russian laws say that stealing is a sin?' Khan, may my children be your servants. Khan, let me go home-it's getting late."

"Don't hurry, you can go later...What happened after that?"

"Let me think, where was I...Hey, don't let the donkey destroy the grapevine."

Noruzali wanted to stop the donkey, but the Khan didn't let him. "Noruzali, don't go, don't go yet. Tell me, what happened then?"

"What happened? I begged the guy, telling him that my Khan would kill me if he took the letter away. I told him to give back my Khan's letter. He said no, he wouldn't give it back. Then I saw that he wanted to run away. God knows how furious I was-I took the guy by the shoulders and shoved him to the ground so hard that he started bleeding at the mouth. Then some soldiers came from the Courthouse, beat me up and took me to prison. May I be your servant forever, my Khan! If it weren't for you, they would have sent me to Siberia. There were some other prisoners in there besides me, and they told me that the Russian guy was an official. Well...what should I have done? Khan, tell me, I'm not to blame, am I?"

The Khan just laughed and laughed.

It was already dark outside. Noruzali put the empty sacks on the back of his hungry donkey and, beating the donkey with a stick, headed back to his village.

In three days, a telegram came from Yerevan for the Khan. It said, "Received your letter. Rooms are ready." And so the Khan and his wife set out for Yerevan shortly afterwards.

After a month and a half, Noruzali was summoned to court and sentenced to three months in prison for having assaulted a civil servant who was carrying out his duties. Noruzali pleaded innocent. The Khan learned about this latest development three months later. It made him stop to think for a while.



*Nakhchivan State Musical Drama Theatre named after  
Jalil Mammadguluzade*



*The oil tanker named after  
Jalil Mammadguluzade*

