

# Ilam Province capable of becoming a tourism hub



Seymareh River  
elgash.com



Kabir Kuh mountain  
saednews.com



Mehran border crossing  
financialtribune.com



Siah Gav Twin Lakes  
iranicultura.it

## Iranica Desk

The western Ilam Province, with an old civilization, rich culture and numerous natural, religious and ancient sites can turn into a tourism hub of the country.

The provincial capital city of Ilam, 710 kilometers from Tehran, surrounded by heights covered with forests, enjoys mild mountainous climate with a pleasant spring.

Ilam is one of the most important provinces of the country, capable of attracting investments in various fields including tourism, agriculture, oil and gas, according to IRNA.

Today, tourism is known as one of the world's most profitable industries in a

way that some countries earn a significant income from it.

The improvement of the tourism industry not only helps generate jobs, but transfers the culture and tradition of one land to the other.

Due to its special geographic location, Ilam Province, known as the Bride of Zagros, is a land of four seasons, which can host travelers throughout the year.

The Mehran border crossing, located in Ilam Province, is a one of the most important commercial highways linking Iran to the markets of Iraq and other regional Arab countries.

Instead of focusing on making investments in the oil and gas industries,

provincial officials are advised to develop the tourism sector and prepare suitable conditions for traveling businesspeople. Local officials believe that Ilam Province is ready to absorb investments for expanding its medical, rural, sports, cultural, nomadic and natural tourism. Undoubtedly, making investments in these sectors will produce huge benefits for investors.

Thousands of Iraqi people arrive in Iran through the Mehran border crossing to receive medical treatments in other provinces of the country, thus development of the health sector in the province and establishment of specialized hospitals and clinics is considered a profit-making investment.

Fortunately, there is a great deal of potential for medical tourism in the province, so more investment could lead to a boom in the industry. However, the tourism infrastructure of the province needs to be further developed.

Moreover, the province has 14 exemplary natural tourism sites and numerous lakes, caves, valleys, canyons, waterfalls, mountains and rivers which help create a relaxing environment for nature lovers.

Due to its geographic location, natural conditions, and the diversity of its habitats, Ilam Province is home to 32 mammals and 183 species of birds. The mountainous areas host many mammals.

In addition to having roaring rivers, artificial and natural lakes, Ilam Province is a desirable destination for those interested in mountain climbing, desert hiking and caving, biking and horseback riding.

On the other hand, Ilam Province hosts numerous remains of the eight-year Iran-Iraq war. This can not only help boost the tourism sector in the province, but also promote the culture of sacrifice and martyrdom.

Various types of traditional handicrafts are presently being manufactured in Ilam Province. Production of traditional floor coverings such as kilim, is an economic activity which can be attractive to private sector investors.

## Interaction between Roman and Sassanid kings

A strange occurrence at a routine diplomatic reception provides an intriguing starting point for considering the basis of Roman and Sassanid kingship and their interaction. It illustrates both the ritually charged nature of environments that grew up around the two sovereigns and the often quite unexpected possibilities that arose from them:

When [Sebuxt, the Sassanid envoy] came, Justin [II] proved not amenable to him especially since, when he entered to make the customary obeisance to the emperor, as he threw himself on the ground the cap which he wore on his head after the Persian manner happened to fall to the floor. The high officials and the rest, taking this as a good omen, flattered the emperor and excited him to think that Persia would soon submit to him.

As this quote from Menander, a Greek dra-

matist and the best-known representative of Athenian New Comedy, illustrates, in order to understand their full power, Roman and Sassanid art and architecture of power cannot be studied in isolation but must be approached in the context provided by the web of visual, spatial, and ritual correspondences in which they participated.

In marked contrast to the present status of surviving ancient art objects, which subsist now in sterile gallery or museum environments, Roman and Sassanid artistic material (including art objects, clothing, and architectural and urban elements) was originally related to and inextricable from the lush fabric of ritual practice that both cultures created and enacted over the centuries.

Art objects and urban spaces served alongside a shifting host of other independent, yet ritually linked

elements, which involved participants and onlookers alike aurally (with the blast of an organ or a roar of acclamation), olfactorily (the smell of burning frankincense and myrrh in braziers or sacred fires), gustatorily (the tastes of delicacies apportioned to a privileged guest from the imperial table), ludically (the excitement of hippodrome or polo), haptically (the tactile sensation of a silk garment given in an investiture), or somatically (the physical sensation of lowering one's body in obeisance). Quite apart from its previous history, physical qualities, original intended function, or origin, an object, image, structure, or urban space, once linked to imperial ritual, performed work in that ritual and became a necessary element in it. Through art and ritual, Roman and Sassanid sovereigns could communicate complex, multivalent, even contradictory, messages



The triumph of Shapur I over the Roman Emperor Valerian, and Philip the Arab, Naqsh-e Rostam, Fars Province

about their identity. Imperial art and architecture developed reciprocally and interdependently with imperial art, as well as serving alongside it. Sovereigns created architectural and visual environments with the knowledge that they would provide a focus for ritual activities. These ritual activities, in turn, commented on and shaped further addi-

tions and interventions. As the ritual and artistic elements of imperial ceremony were interwoven, it is not surprising that an alteration in the fabric of one had implications for that of the other. A change in ritual practice could imply a new meaning for a structure, and new structures or images within a ritual environment could modify the performance

and significance of a ritual. The accessions of Roman and Sassanid sovereigns provide illuminating examples of how differentially they used expressive events to mold their realm's urban or even provincial topography around their particular vision of kingship and appropriated the significance of important spaces by tying them into large-scale expressive

events. In the fifth and early sixth centuries, as successions in the later Roman Empire became more stable and the emperors left the new capital of Constantinople less frequently, the city, its history and institutions, and the spaces that represented them became increasingly important components of imperial ritual.