



ASĀLEM

ASĀLEM, a mountainous district in Ṭāleš, now a *dehestān* of the central *baḡš* of the *šahrestān* of Ṭawāleš, province of Gilān, Iran. Stretching about 11 km along the Caspian Sea, it comprises the whole basin of the Nāv-rūd and the upper valley of the Rūd-e Dīnāčāl (or Rūd-e Lomer), the lower reaches of which mark the border with the district of Ṭāleš-Dūlāb to the south; to the north, the small stream of Ḳālačašma (or Sardāb) separates it from the district of Kargānrūd. It is inhabited by Sunni Ṭāleš, who speak a dialect that is close to those of Kargānrūd and Ṭāleš-Dūlāb, and by some Shi'ite Turks native of Ḳalkāl. It had a population of 21,800 inhabitants in 1355 Š./1976.

This district possesses several ancient monuments, like the *torba* of Pīr-e Herāt in Gilān-deh, the shrine of Čav Owlīā in Kārband, or the ruins of the Espīa Mazgat (white mosque) of Kīškāla, but it only appears in history in the time of Fath-'Alī Shah Qājār, who recognized the authority of Moḡammad Khan Asālemī in return for his help against Mīr Mošṭafā Khan of Nāmīn (J. B. Fraser, *Travels and Adventures in the Persian Provinces on the Southern Banks of the Caspian Sea*, London, 1826, p. 145).

Its main economic activities are growing rice in the plain, wheat and maize in the mid-mountain region around the old villages of Nāv and Lomer, and raising cows and sheep, migrating between the *qešlāq* forests and the sub-alpine *yeylāq*; its very beautiful beech groves support an industrial sawmill at Ḳalīfaābād-e Asālem. Its present center, the bazaar of Asālem, has developed along the Bandar-e Anzalī-Āstārā road, half way between the residence of the ancient khans at Dīgasarā and the old market, situated on the Caspian shore at



Sīāḥčāl. One of the only roads passable by motor vehicles across the range of Ṭāleš links Asālem to Herūābād, the center of the *šahrestān* of Kalkāl.

See also Ṭāleš.

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