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## Economic Files

A weekly business-oriented television show produced, written, directed, and broadcast by Iraqis with additional support provided by the Center for International Private Enterprise

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### Episode 12 Synopsis: Tourism and Its Effect on the Economy

Airdate: September 17, 2005

**Featured Guests:** Dr. Hasan Noor Elyasiry (Economic Professor, Baghdad University), Majeed Hameed Alazawy (Tourism Researcher), and Khaled Alwady (Journalist).

The episode evaluated the role and importance of tourism in the economic development of Iraq. Discussions centered on the following issues:

- Definition of tourism
- Types of tourism
- Challenges to the growth of the tourism sector in Iraq

The program began with a segment on historical and natural sites in Iraq, showing the **immense potential of the tourism industry**. The featured guests emphasized that Iraq has the potential to be one of the most popular tourist destinations in the world, and that increased tourism would greatly increase economic growth. However, there are clearly a number of obstacles to overcome before the tourism industry in Iraq can flourish.

In assessing the issues preventing the growth of a vibrant tourism sector, the participants identified numerous problems, including

- Damaged infrastructure
- Weak laws and regulations
- A lack of business skills applicable to the tourism industry
- Policy instability
- Destruction and vandalism of historic sites

During a discussion on weak laws and regulations, the participants emphasized the lack of laws that protect against the formation of monopolies. Featured guests also expressed concern over the laws and practices that hinder business registration and investment, both local and international. Mr. Elyasiry remarked **“We need the government to encourage the private sector through fewer restrictions on investment.”** The participants also noted that it is difficult to open and run a business in the tourism sector because the name and functions of the ministry governing the sector change regularly.

Further, the featured guests emphasized the lack of business tourism skills in Iraq. They suggested that Iraqis in the tourism industry could learn from their counterparts in countries like Jordan and Egypt, as well as through the implementation of **training programs on advertising, communications, and management**.

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