Ashuradeh Island, located at the tip of Miyankhal, is the only Iranian island in the Caspian Sea, which, as yet, remains open to tourists. The Department of Environment, will become a tourism hub.

Tourism in Ashuradeh Island is oriented towards winter tourists. The island has unique attractions and is one of the important hubs of tourism, but its potentials have not yet been utilized effectively. It is situated 3 km from the coast of Turkmen Port and is bounded to Caspian Sea in the north, Chequest Oghli Strait in the east, Khami water canal in the east and Gulf of Gorgan in the south.

Some historical documents state that Ashuradeh consisted of three islands to which have been submerged by tidal waves, Melte News Agency reported.

Potential sites

The third presidential trip to Golestan in October 2010, a working group for following up Ashuradeh’s problems was formed. It was decided that environmental and tourism projects be carried out in accordance with environmental considerations. Officials have emphasized that this will help generate more jobs and lead to the economic prosperity of the region.

The issue of separating Ashuradeh from Miyankhal Biosphere Reserve in Mazandaran province has been a source of debate among the environmental officials of Golestan and Mazandaran provinces. Susan Alinejad, the director general of Golestan’s Department of Environment, said development activities should be lawful and expectations should be based on capabilities and potentials.

With regard to Ashuradeh Island, the type of tourism activity we want for this island should be determined. Ashuradeh can offer its capacities to the province, but it must be in mind that those who visit the country’s northern provinces are not looking for a hotel and want to enjoy its pristine natural resources,” she said.

Alinejad emphasized that Ashuradeh cannot be created elsewhere and it is more appropriate to maintain development and development can wait and it will be possible and under social justice is honored. If we want to prevent migration, we should create the parameters needed for development. Progress takes place within the framework of the environment,” he said.

Topography

The total area of Ashuradeh Island is about 1,200 hectares, though only 400 hectares of it is usable. This island was a hunting area during the Safavid era and consequently cars were built in it. Due to the rise in the Caspian Sea water level, Ashuradeh Island separated from Miyankhal. The island is 26 meters above the level of five waters and it has mild climatic conditions. The island had over 1,000 residents and boated facilities such as police station, junior high school, shops, mosque and a hospital (a place for holding religious ceremonies). People of the area bred livestock, were farmers and fishermen until the flood swamped the island in 1993 and all its inhabitants abandoned it. The flora of the island include raspberry bushes and sour pomegranate trees. Animals like jackal, fox, rabbit, fish and partridge are found on the island.

Based on the Cabinet approval, this Iranian island is expected to rival Iran’s Kosh Island in the north. The Cabinet has ordered that a special working group be formed to expedite the development of the island.