

# Lake revived, opening put on hold

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After years of neglect, Ambattur lake, one of the major waterbodies in the city's western parts, has been revived as an eco-park but its operation has been deferred due to the lockdown.

Spread over 440 acres, the lake was one of the three water bodies, including Retteri and Korattur, taken up for a ₹59.18 crore eco-restoration project a few years ago. Officials of the Water Resources Department (WRD) said a 1,500-metre-long walkers' track was created along the lake bund. Visitors would also have access to another path in the park.

"We have employed someone to maintain the plants there. The lake area also has an outdoor gym and children's play area," an official said. Pollution, a major is-



The newly built outdoor gym and footpath around the Ambattur lake eco-park. ■ K. PICHUMANI

sue plaguing the lake, was addressed to some extent, with the quality of water improving compared to last year. However according to the department, more effort was needed to make the lake a viable drinking water source.

"We have reduced the sewage discharge into the lake by 80%

and have plugged four drains. The lake receives sewage from a few areas such as Moondru Nagar and Thirumullaivoyal. Once the sewage treatment plant operated by the Avadi municipal corporation becomes operational, the issue will be sorted," another official said, and added that nearly 120 encroachments were removed.

WRD has sought ₹21 crore to increase the lake's storage capacity by 25% for better groundwater recharge in the neighbourhood. The lake can currently store about 500 million cubic feet of water. "We also plan to provide mud flats in the lake for nesting birds," an official said.

Welcoming the initiative, residents noted that sewage discharge must be completely stopped and boating arrangements should be made.