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Lake loses 177 acres to encroachments

From 214 acres in 1972, it is now 36 acres; Corporation plans floating gardens

The Chennai Corporation will develop floating gardens in the Villivakkam lake as part of the eco-restoration of the waterbody.

According to a study, a number of houses, commercial buildings and industries have been developed in 83% of the lake area, reducing the waterbody to 36.34 acres. In 1972, the lake had an area of 214 acres.

The existing boundaries of the lake include Jawaharlal Nehru Road and Padi Railway Station on the west, residential areas on the north, Chennai-Tiruvallur High Road on the south and SIDCO Nagar Industrial Estate on the east.

“Most of the lake has been lost. The remaining part is polluted because of letting of industrial effluents. We will develop a floating raft of phytoremediation plants in the lake. The roots will absorb pollutants from the water. The plants will release the pollutants as harmless gases in the atmosphere, cleaning the

waterbody,” said an official.

The study by the Corporation has pointed to dumping of construction debris in the lake and unauthorised settlements.