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### Amritsar Joins Green Pilgrimage Network

Amritsar officially joined the [Green Pilgrimage Network](#) at a conference in Assisi, Italy, in early November. EcoSikh and Green Amritsar project leaders shared the Sikh perspective on environment and presented a green pathway forward for the city. The new Green Pilgrimage Network along with [ICLEI Global - Local Governments for Sustainability](#) will support Amritsar's efforts in eco-friendly design. Amritsar has already planted 3.5 million trees since 2007, introduced eco-rickshas to lower air pollution, and installed a 2000L solar powered water heater over the main *langar* hall for cooking.



See coverage on EcoSikh's work in Amritsar by [National Public Radio](#).

### EcoSikh visits Sustainable City, Thane

EcoSikh program manager Ravneet Pal Singh along with stakeholders of the Ludhiana Solar City project in Punjab visited [Thane](#), a city located near Mumbai with a population of 1.9 million, on 13-14 Oct 2011.

Thane is the first solar city under a new funding scheme to harness non-conventional resources and apply legal mechanisms to enforce the use of solar energy in all new buildings. In addition Thane is scaling the use of kitchen waste to generate power, high tech energy efficient appliances, and rainwater harvesting making the city one of the best portfolios of sustainability in the nation. The visit was intended to bring new ideas to the three major [solar cities](#) in Punjab - Ludhiana, Amritsar, and Mohali spearheaded by the Punjab Energy Development Agency.

### Clean Air on Bandi Chorr Diwas

Every year Sikhs celebrate *Bandi Chorr*, the day when Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji refused to leave Gwalior Fort without the release of 52 other prisoners. In recent years, air pollution levels during celebrations have escalated due to the heavy use of firecrackers around our Gurdwaras. According to the [Punjab Pollution Control Board](#) air pollution levels around Darbar Sahib are five times levels considered healthy and can lead to heart and lung complications, including asthma, lung cancer, and heart disease.



EcoSikh and the Punjab Pollution Control Board head released statements on remembering *Bandi Chorr* with the spirit of *sarbat da bhala* and are working on finding eco-friendly alternatives.

## Gurdwaras in Jalandhar District selected for Rainwater Harvesting

25 Gurdwaras, schools, and *panchayat ghars* in Jalandhar District will be retrofitted with rainwater harvesting technology, a method of collecting and storing rainwater for human use and groundwater recharge.

The precedent setting effort is part of a new initiative to bring 4,334 hectares of villages along the Chitti Bein under an Integrated Watershed Management Program. The water quality in the Chitti Bein has received notable attention by Sikh environmentalist [Baba Balbir Singh Seechewal](#) who is working to restore the river with *sewa* from nearby villages, after successful work along the Kali Bein where Guru Nanak Dev Ji met *Akaal Purakh*.

### Did You Know?



Sarovars are one of most important examples of our Gurus' understanding of the human need for water. When the Gurus established towns and cities, each was created around a religious center where the focus was on a lifestyle based on sharing, promoting equity and the optimum utilization of resources.

Gurdwaras were specifically designed to have a water tank, or be near running water such as river, or pool - to use as a community resource. The city of Tarn Taran in Amritsar District, for example was established around the [Gurdwara Darbar Sahib](#) and the sarovar, once entirely fed by rainfall, to meet the needs of all who came to learn from the Guru.

