

THE MONK WHO BLOGS

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The Gyalwang Drukpa, head of the Drukpa lineage, is a modern day monk. He blogs, is on social networking sites, and also believes, "It's time for action. Only meditation will not help anymore." Undertaking a month-long 'pad yatra' from Manali on May 23 to conclude at Ladakh around the Hemis festival on July 3, Gyalwang Drukpa is using this opportunity to spread awareness about the deplorable living conditions of people of Ladakh. With each km of the yatra being sponsored by an international funding, about 30 USD a km, the proceeds thus gathered would be directed towards elevating Ladakh. Terming it, 'Walking on the world's rooftop: on a



(Extreme left) Gyalwang Drukpa releasing eco-friendly balloons to mark his yatra

spiritual path', the ever smiling Gyalwang Drukpa, the 12th reincarnation of the founder of Drukpa lineage, has undertaken this mission to integrate education, medical, environment and heritage issues. Environment (read nature in all its connotations) is indeed close to his heart. "We want to urge peo-

ple to shun plastic bags. They choke the environment. We have manufactured fibre bags which we'd distribute along the yatra," he said in city on Friday to officially announce the yatra.

Ladakh, with its huge tourist attraction, is still grossly marginalized as far as development goes. This spiri-

tual guide is hand holding even the government to pave the way for a better life in that region. Like he writes in his autobiography, "I always wanted to reach out to others and be of help," he is steadily implementing his desires into concrete action. One such is his initiative of building the Druk Amitabha Mountain, a nunnery that trains nuns in contemporary education, Buddhist teachings, kung fu, computer literacy. "Women are becoming very strong today. They outnumber men in my 'pad yatra' too, which is a tough call considering the 400 kms to be covered on foot," he spoke of his respect for the women kind.

And while he's on the go, he'd also educate natives on how to prevent kerosene accidents, which often affect the inhabitants, largely children.