

# Pilgrim's progress

Photos: Parvesh Chauhan

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**E**very theory is futile and meditation a waste, unless it's practised and applied the way it should be. "That's the reason I say to the nuns and monks, 'go out of monasteries, reach out to people and tell them how they can lead a better life'. Mere meditation would help only in the enlightenment of the self but how can it benefit others unless you talk about it," come the wise words from His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa, head of the eight-century-old Drukpa Lineage.

On Friday, he was in town to yet again practice what he has always preached, "Live to love." In an endeavour to do the same, he will be leading a pilgrimage of 1000 Buddhist monks and nuns from Manali to Hemis in Ladakh. "In the 400-km-long *padyatra*, we aim to meet as many people as possible, teach them how important education is, preservation of environment and heritage to make their tomorrow worth it."

'Say no to plastic bags' is another campaign that will be launched alongside the pilgrimage.

For all practical reasons, he

major role to play in bringing about the change. "The number of nuns in the nunneries is growing and at present, it is 400. There, they are being taught the English language and computers with the intention that when they reach out to the masses, they can impart the same knowledge." And women need not make any special efforts to serve humanity, "For, they are blessed with versatility and it is in their nature to contribute towards any humanitarian activity. So, even while bringing about change in society, they will prove to be catalysts.

As for the duties of men, "They will follow women and the aims will be achieved."

In view of their vision to make the world a better to live in, it doesn't surprise us to know they have supporters in Brad Pitt, the royal family of Britain and the masses throughout the world. "What makes me happy is the fact that many youngsters are joining us to serve mankind. Tomorrow is far more important than today, just as the new generation is. Buddhism is not a fanatic religion; it is a philosophy that doesn't list any conventions except 'live to love', which I believe, is the

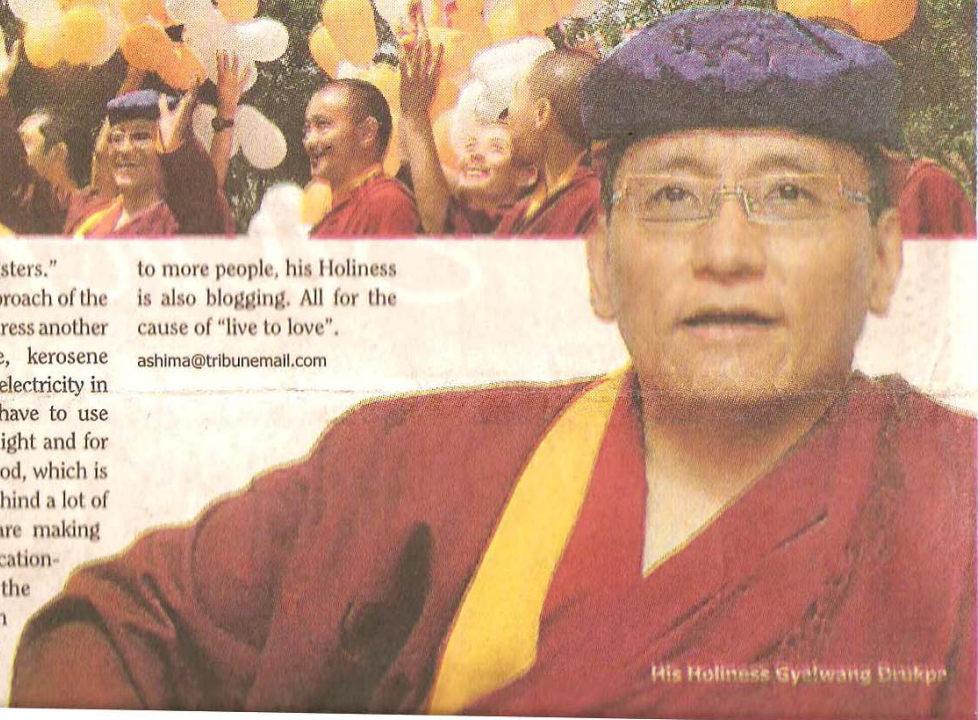


attracting youngsters."

The holistic approach of the *padyatra* will address another important issue, kerosene deaths. With no electricity in Ladakh, people have to use kerosene oil for light and for warming their food, which is also the cause behind a lot of accidents. "We are making efforts to give vocational training to the people of Ladakh so that they can earn their living."

to more people, his Holiness is also blogging. All for the cause of "live to love".

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His Holiness Gyalwang Drukpa