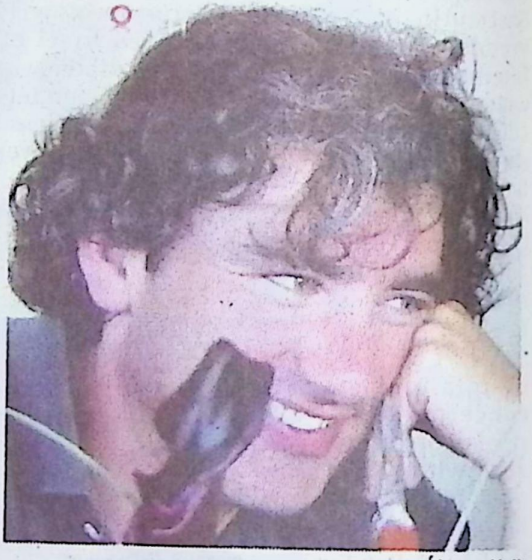
The Bicycle Clown

Álvaro Neil, the biciclown (bicycle clown), was born in Oviedo (Asturias), Spain on July 17, 1967. He studied Law in Pamplona (Navarra) and trained as a clown in Barcelona and Madrid. After selling his car, he left his job at a Notary Office in Madrid to cycle around South America (2001-2003). He also offered his clown shows for free to the poor audiences. He came back to Spain, wrote a book about his experience, Miles of Smiles around the World (2004-2014). Then he started preparing his big project. He started on November 19, 2004 from his local city, Oviedo. The first leg of this big project was Africa. Two years and nine months later, he had cycled down the west coast, from Morocco to Cape Town and then backed up to Cairo, covering 30 countries and a whopping 38,000 miles. He stopped in Cairo (Egypt) to write his second book. And he kept on going. Middle East was the second leg of his journey and then Central Asia. He had published his third book, available in English, Photograph diary of a clown in Africa. Crossing Karakorum highway (between China and Pakistan) in winter he came into the Indian Subcontinent. Then Nepal and northern India, Sikkim. Alvaro entered Bangladesh on February 12 and left 20 days later for Kolkata.



Álvaro Neil

He has offered 49 performances for at least 15,000 people on his way. Some people think he is crazy, others think he is an adventurer; he has even been incarcerated at times while on his journey according to his website, www.biciclown.com. He does not think of the future, never forgets the past and lives the present, the only verbal useful tense. Interviewed by **RAHAD ABIR**

When did you plan to travel the world and why?

After finishing my South America trip (2001-2003) I decided to start my world tour (2004-2014). There is no reason for it, as the sun has no reason to give us light every day.

Who are your biggest influences to be a globetrotter?

The people who have died very young like some of my friends, they inspire me not to lose my life working in an office.

What sort of difficulties have you faced at the very outset of your journey?

Cars. Drivers are crazy, especially in India and also in Bangladesh. In India they respect a cow but not a cyclist. Also some diseases like malaria. I had it four times in Africa

How do you manage your travel cost? In this respect, what biggest changes did you have to bring in to your life style?

I live cheap. I don't go to good hotels or good restaurants. If the country is very expensive I cook myself. I sleep in my tent. I had worked five years as a lawyer and saved some money. Also I wrote three books and I get money selling them. And now I got some sponsors who provide me with the best material.



Clowning around with a young fan.

Could you please give us a day's sketch?

I wake up early, cycle for about 100km, stop every two hours to rest and eat something, talk to people or to myself and look for a place to sleep, cook, wash my