



Somen Debnath's

Around the World on Bicycle Tour for HIV/AIDS Awareness Programme and Seminar on Indian Culture



Media Coverage / Revue de presse

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YouTube: www.youtube.com/user/Somen2020

Others cover, we expose...



THE HINDU Telegraph.co.uk hindustantimes PUNE MIRROR.in

yeeyan 译言

AHMEDABAD Newsline
cities.expressindia.com

daijiworld.com
A portal linking the West Coast of India and the World

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Express India's Publication in USA

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THE ECONOMIC TIMES

“Conquering the World on a Bicycle”

In the countries he travels by, the mission of Somen Debnath raises interest. Being one of a kind, as his entire travelling will cover 191 countries in 16 years, media always support and encourage him.

In every country he travels to, he gives interviews for paper and online journals, radio and televisions regarding his **“World On Bicycle Tour For HIV/AIDS Awareness Programme & Seminar on Indian Culture”**.

In India, people showed lots of enthusiasm regarding his programme and journalist spoke about his adventure under titles like “The Crusader on Wheels” (Tribune India, Himachal), “Intrepid Traveller” (The Tamil Nadu Hindu), “Mission on Wheels” (The Madhura Hindu), “Conquering the World on a Bicycle” (The Chandigarh Tribune), “One Man’s Crusade on a Bicycle” (Kashmir Times), “untiring campaigner” (Indian Express Newspaper), “committed crusader” (The Andhra Pradesh Hindu)...

Others cover, we expose...



Links to TV interviews with Somen Debnath

<http://www.ct24.cz/domaci/96004-indicky-cyklista-ma-v-nohach-79-tisic-km-ted-i-par-ceskych/>
(Praga, 20.07.2010)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZlUFFbKnyL4> (CTC Moldova, 04.2010)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TS_B4a_FEpQ (National Tv Moldova, 04.2010)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4bdUMx6RHgE> (HotNewsTV.ro, 03.2010)

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEyA3wzhv_s (National TV Bulgaria, 01.2010)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vbYKoNCfyEA> (National Television, Macedonia, 06.2009)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bop-yZVOv24> (A1TVNews Macedonia, 06.2009)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P4cXjwn2Gy8> (Croatia Travel, 05.2009)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6InDxejrQ0> (BTV News, Bulgaria, 04.2009)

http://atv.hu/videotar/091124_biciklivel_jott_egyenesen_indiabol.html (Hungary)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PowYfusizew> (Italy, Rai3Italia, regione Puglia, 20.08.2009)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRJ0hQmSox8> (Antena Sud, Italy, 18.08.2009)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OICciPmJAlw> (Radio24ILSOLE, Italy, 08.2009)



Articles about Somen Debnath's Mission

INDIA

The Hindu

Andhra Pradesh, Hyderabad, India, 2005

<http://www.hinduonnet.com/thehindu/thscrip/print.pl?file=2005120202060200.htm&date=2005/12/02/&prc=th&>

Photo: **Committed crusader: Somen Debnath in Hyderabad** as part of his mission on Wednesday,
Photo: K. Gajendran, © Copyright
2000 - 2009 The Hindu

THE HINDU



Pedalling to spread a message on AIDS, Staff Reporter

Somen Debnath of West Bengal wants to cover the world by 2020

"Somen Debnath of West Bengali wants to cover the world by 2020" - "Though he has no sponsors or adequate funds to finance his mission, titbits keep coming from Chief Ministers, Governors and officials he met during the expedition. Loaded with campaign material given by different State AIDS Control Societies and CDs from different State Tourism departments, the youngster says: "I could interact with thousands of people in villages and towns, including ultras in the North East. They all cooperated with me and attended my impromptu seminars."

The Hindu

THE HINDU

Karwar, Karnataka, India, 2006

<http://www.thehindu.com/2006/09/16/stories/2006091605220300.htm>

Karwar: Somen Debnath, a 23-year-old youth from West Bengal is on a world tour on his bicycle to create awareness among people about HIV/AIDS. Mr. Debnath began his venture from Basanti (Sunderban), his native place in 24 Parganas district on May 24, 2004, just after completing his B.Sc. and has toured Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Myanmar and also 15 States in the country. He was here on Wednesday on his way to Mumbai. Mr. Debnath hopes to complete his mission by 2020. He plans to visit 191 countries in this period. He said it was his dream to tour the world on bicycle. He has no sponsors. However, he gets help from organisations and individuals. On his rare experience during the tour so far, he said he came across some extremists in North Eastern states. He said they were courteous and appreciated his adventure.



The Hindu

THE HINDU

Kerala, India, 04.09. 2005

<http://www.hindu.com/2006/09/04/stories/2006090400470200.htm>

Youth on a cycling mission

[...] He had covered Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. "His plan now is to go to central and then to northern parts of the country from where his mission will cover Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and to Russia before he leaves for Europe, Africa and finally to South and North America.

"I met 48 tribal communities, covered 2,517 schools, 1,204 colleges, 28 universities, 46 centres of sex workers, 152 non-governmental organisations and scores of roadside dhabas," says Mr. Debnath.

He met 15 Governors and 13 Chief Ministers, including Chief Minister V.S. Achuthanandan. His mission is supported by State AIDS prevention and control Societies.

Apart from HIV/AIDS awareness, Mr. Debnath is also promoting Yoga and Pranayama. He covers an average 75 km a day on his bicycle.

His journey is not without difficulties. He says he faced insurgents during his tour of insurgency-hit areas in the country, especially, Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Andhra Pradesh and Bhutan. In some of these areas, insurgents gave him accommodation, food and even financial support. When the youth started his journey, he had Rs.400. "As the journey progressed many people and organisations came forward to offer small help," he says. At present, he has no sponsor for his journey as he is about to start a new phase of his world-wide programme."



Indian Express Newspaper

Surat, India 2.12.2006

<http://cities.expressindia.com/fullstory.php?newsid=211656>

AHMEDABAD **Newsline**
cities.expressindia.com



UNTIRING CAMPAIGNER: Somen Debnath's campaign for an HIV/AIDS-free world.

Spokes-person to tour world for AIDS cause Somen Debnath witnessed ostracisation of HIV-positive patient and vowed to do his bit for the AIDS awareness cause

[...]Today he is 21 and is on a world tour on a bicycle to promote AIDS awareness. Debnath, from Sundarbans district of West Bengal, was in Surat yesterday. "Everyone spends crores on spreading HIV/AIDS awareness in urban areas. My focus is rural areas and rural people. During my journey, I have been able to meet tribals in the North-East and Mynamar, villagers in Bangladesh, sex workers in Andhra Pradesh, Mumbai, and Chennai, and HIV positive people in Sri Lanka," said Debnath, who has done his BSc in Zoology from Calcutta University.

During his tour, Debnath shows a film to his target audience to spread the right message. He has conducted AIDS awareness programmes in 3,000 schools, 1,632 colleges, 32 universities, 152 NGOs, 62 redlight districts, and numerous roadside dhabas.

It is not that his journey so far has been trouble-free. "I have been robbed several times on my way. I have been picked up and blindfolded by ultras in Assam and Naxals in Andhra Pradesh. But when they came to know about the purpose my visit, they would let me go with a gun salute," he says.

So far he has been able to meet leaders in Myanmar, Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Sri Lanka, and governors and ministers in 18 states.

From Gujarat he plans to travel through Rajasthan to reach Delhi, where he says some MPs are planning to arrange a meeting between him and Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

"My plan is to take the age-old route from Delhi to Islamabad, Afghanistan and then enter Russia. The Indian Embassy has been a big help so far," he says.

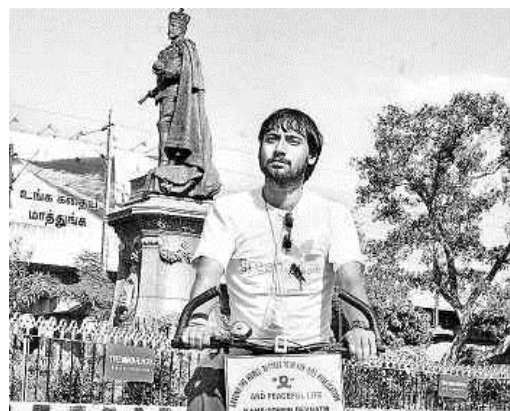


The Hindu THE HINDU

Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India, 2006

<http://www.thehindu.com/2006/02/14/stories/2006021417340300.htm>

INTREPID TRAVELLER: Somen Debnath.
Photo: S.Thanthoni



Passion for pedalling takes him places, Staff Reporter

"Somen Debnath, 23, likes cycling. So much so that he has covered 13 States in India (over 38,700 km), and also Myanmar and Bhutan. His aim is to spread awareness on HIV/AIDS. Somen, who is now in the city, plans to go to Sri Lanka next, but does not have enough funds. "I need about Rs. 15,000 to fly to Sri Lanka and also to transport my cycle." He recently met Tamil Nadu Governor Surjeet Singh Barnala, who gave him Rs. 5,000. Somen, who started his journey in May 2004, comes from Basanti village in West Bengal. He carries a kit to attend to punctures and other problems. He eats what the locals offer him and conducts workshops for students."

Mangalorean.com



Mangalore, India, 10.09.2006

<http://mangalorean.com/news.php?newstype=local&newsid=33305>

A global tour with a mission

MANGALORE Sept 10: He was mistaken for a spy and almost shot at by militants. Sneakers given to him by the Assam Rifles could have proved to be the undoing of his mission. Meet Somen Debnath (23), a resident of Basanti from Sunderbans of West Bengal, aspires to be a globetrotter, albeit with a difference and mission to boot. His mission is to spread awareness on HIV/AIDS and he is cycling around the globe for it.
[...]



The Hindu

THE HINDU

Madhurai, India, 04.08.2006

<http://www.hindu.com/yw/2006/08/04/stories/2006080402750600.htm>

REACHING OUT: Kudos
to Somen Debnath.
PHOTO: S. JAMES



Mission on wheels. On a cycle to create awareness about AIDS, this youngster is sure of his purpose, S.S. KAVITHA

The Rotary Laharry Matriculation Higher Secondary School recently had a determined youth, who had chosen a road less travelled. He is on a cycle expedition to create awareness on the Human Immuno Deficiency Virus (HIV) and Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS), all over the world, especially among students and youth. The 23-year-old Somen Debnath of Basanthi near the Sunderbans in West Bengal had decided to pedal even on the second day of his graduation.

"In 1993, I saw the body of a man who had died of AIDS. Nobody attended his funeral. I asked my teacher about it. But, she refused to discuss it. A few years later, I understood how those with AIDS are discriminated against because of ignorance and prejudice. I wanted to change this, so I decided to do something. I chose the bicycle because it is the only transport I can afford," says Debnath.

After interacting with the students of Rotary Laharry Matriculation School on HIV and AIDS, Debnath stressed the need for yoga and meditation to control the body and mind.

He also urged the students to work for the betterment of the country and society to which they belong and pointed out that youth can take up such major social problems and involve themselves in community service.

"When you set out on a mission you will not be alone. People are always behind us for a good cause," he says and pointed out that if there is a will anything is possible under the sun.



Kashmir, Srinagar, India, 17.08.2007

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/News-Feed/srinagar/Youth-touring-world-on-bicycle-on-noble-mission/242925/Article1-242923.aspx>

Youth touring world on bicycle to spread AIDS awareness

A youth from West Bengal, who had set off on a world tour on bicycle to spread AIDS Awareness, reached Srinagar three days ago.

Somen Debnath from West Bengal's Sunderban reached Srinagar under his mission and had visited Kargil, Leh, Ganderbal and parts of Srinagar to campaign against the dreaded disease.

Talking about AIDS in Jammu and Kashmir, the 24-year-old PhD scholar said, "During my interaction, I found people here are simple and religious minded and are aware of the ill-effects of illicit relations and that is why there are less HIV infected patients in the state compared to other states."

During his trip to Ladakh, Somen also trekked the highest motorable road in the world when he crossed 18,000 feet high Khardungla pass on bicycle.

Somen said he was moved by an AIDS related death in his neighbourhood during the last 10 years ago and decided to go round the globe for HIV/AIDS awareness programme. [...]

Somen claimed that so far he had visited five countries so far, including Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

He has toured 27 states and five union territories of the country and is in Kashmir for the past three days; from here he will leave for Punjab. He intends to enter Pakistan via Wagah border in November.

Aiming to complete his mission by 2020, Somen will tour 32 countries by flight and 28 nations by ship and the bicycle will be all along with me, he said.



Kashmir Times

Kashmir, Jammu, India, 22.08.2007

<http://www.kashmirtimes.com/archive/0708/070823/JRegion.htm>

Missing against AIDS: one man's crusade on a bicycle,

By Ashutosh Sharma

If his claims are to be believed, he's been in the thick of spine chilling adventures in some of the most deadly conflict zones of the country, experiencing close shave with death in many of these. Yet, undeterred by such ordeals, he continues with his one man crusade to create awareness about AIDS.

In the evening of August 12, while cycling on his way from Baltal to Sonamarg, he was mistaken for a spy and kept captive by militants for quite some time in Kashmir. But this was no way maiden experience for him as in Assam he was almost shot by the jawans of Assam Rifles at one place and ULFA at the other place. Similarly he came face to face with many other militant groups operating across northeastern state of the country. Every time he successfully escaped death during the pursuance of his mission.

It was strength of determination that kept him focussed on his life's prime objective-creating awareness on Human Immuno deficiency Virus (HIV)/ Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) among the youth all over the world by cycling around the globe and holding lectures.

Meet the man with a mission: Somen Debnath (24), a resident of small village Basanti from Sunderbans of West Bengal, a strange cyclist, is in the state as a part of his mission. He reached Jammu straightway from the mountainous terrains of Leh, Kargil, Drass, Zazala, Srinagar and Patnitop. During his trip to Ladakh, Somen also claims to have bicycled up to the highest motorable road in the world when he crossed 18,000 feet high Khardungla pass on bicycle. Till now he has peddled over 58,000 km and is still doing so relentlessly.

Somen, a science graduate set out on his mission two days after he completed his examinations on May 25, 2004. He has so far covered five countries including Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka and Nepal as well as 27 India states and five Union Territories within the country. His tour gave Somen an opportunity to be in the exalted company of 27 Governors and 26 Chief Ministers who also helped him monetarily.

Apart from being inspired by the ideology of Swami Vivekananda, the disturbing incident which he witnessed at 14 is a consistent source of strength for him.

"I was a happy boy like any other of my age till the day I happened to see an AIDS victim dying in my village. Everybody feared to go near the body and it was abandoned. It disturbed me. I wanted to know the reason but nobody explained. One day the seriousness of the issue dawned on me, I was already 21. But it had strengthened my conviction to help the society," narrates Somen, who is on a bicycle mission.

...Here in the state he met various NGOs across Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh besides AIDS control societies. While sharing his experience so far he said, "Several state governments like Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Orissa, Bengal and Gujrat are doing well in this direction but on the other side several other states are not so conscious about the disease and are entertaining several myths related with the dreaded disease. But here in summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir he alleges, he got a rough treatment from the staff of AIDS Control Society, which he described as humiliating. Having covered nearly every Indian state since he embarked on the unique mission, Somen hopes to complete his world trip sometime in 2020 after covering 191 nations in the process.

Despite the fact that his mission is enormous, Somen remains charged with his determination to cover the world wide program in the set time frame.



The Chandigarh Tribune

Chandigarh, 09.07.2007

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20070710/cth1.htm>



**Somen on his
bicycle to spread
awareness about
AIDS.**

Conquering the world on a bicycle, Rajay Deep

This young lad is on a unique mission. Twenty-four-old Somen Debnath is on a world cycle tour to create awareness about HIV/AIDS.

Somen, who set out on the tour on May 27, 2004, has travelled to almost every state in the country, except Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir. Currently, Somen is in Chandigarh to drive home his message. [...]

"The society also could not answer all my questions, so I took to reading books, pamphlets and information brochures to learn more about AIDS. I started my mission by sharing the information I received with my friends and fellow villagers. I am really thankful to all who encouraged me," said Somen. [...]

"Another interesting incident took place when I was crossing the Kazhiranga. I found myself sandwiched between a rhino and a tiger. I stood still, closed my eyes and prayed to God. Thankfully, I survived," he added.

Somen's tour is not without problems. Underlining the need for a formal sponsor, Somen says he lives on donations. "I started off with Rs 2,000 that MLA Sanath Kumar Mandal gave me. Several ministers and social workers have also supported me. Governor of Tamil Nadu Surjit Singh Barnala also gave me Rs 40,000 for the trip," Somen gratefully adds.

Somen sums up his message in two sentences. "The best way to prevent HIV is by awareness. This is more important than cure."



Economic Times

THE ECONOMIC TIMES

Kashmir, Srinagar, India, 17.08.2007

<http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/articleshow/msid-2287994,prtpage-1.cms>

A ride to spread awareness 'bout AIDS!

SRINAGAR: A youth from West Bengal, who had set off on a world tour on bicycle to spread AIDS Awareness, reached here three days ago.

Somen Debnath from West Bengal's Sunderban reached here under his mission and had visited Kargil, Leh, Ganderbal and parts of Srinagar to campaign against the dreaded disease.

Talking about AIDS in Jammu and Kashmir, the 24-year-old PhD scholar said, "During my interaction, I found people here are simple and religious minded and are aware of the ill-effects of illicit relations and that is why there are less HIV infected patients in the state compared to other states."

During his trip to Ladakh, Somen also trekked the highest motorable road in the world when he crossed 18,000 feet high Khardungla pass on bicycle.

Somen said he was moved by an AIDS related death in his neighbourhood 10 years ago and decided to go round the globe for HIV/AIDS awareness programme.

"I kicked off my journey on a bicycle on May 27, 2004 from my native village with just Rs 600 in the pocket," he said.

Somen claimed that so far he had visited five countries so far, including Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

He has toured 27 states and five union territories of the country and is in Kashmir for the past three days, from here he will leave for Punjab. He intends to enter Pakistan via Wagah border in November.

Aiming to complete his mission by 2020, Somen will tour 32 countries by flight and 28 nations by ship and the bicycle will be all along with me, he said.



Chandigarh, India, 25 July 2007

<http://www.tribuneindia.com/2007/20070725/himplus1.htm>

MISSION 2020 Crusader on Wheels by Kuldeep Chauhan

Eight gun-totting ULFA ultras in the jungle of North-East pointed guns at him. A drunken cop at a police station in Sikkim kicked him. LTTE terrorists in Srilanka beat him up. Sex workers tried to entice him. For, all of them mistakenly perceived him as an intelligence man in the garb of an anti-AIDS campaigner on the bicycle.

But all this has failed to deter 24-year-old Somen Debnath from doing what he calls a lifelong mission— touring India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Russia on his bicycle to convey a message, as professed by his hero Swami Vivekananda. He hopes to accomplish his mission by 2020.

Coming from the country's prized Royal Bengali tigers' reserve Sunderbans, in West Bengal's 24 Pargana, this young left B.Sc. Zoology and painting to embark upon his mission on May 27, 2004. Somen's toured 26 states and even countries including Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Myanmar on his bicycle covering 36,000 km. He's paddled his bicycle (carrying an AIDS message) and met lakhs of people including 23 chief ministers and 25 governors in the course of his journey. Somen drove his bicycle through Solan, Shimla, Mandi, Kullu and Manali and is now on his way to Ladakh.

Somen is cagey about his future plans for sex workers, children with AIDS and orphans, but he shares his experiences during the course of his ride, "The AIDS message is not reaching where it is needed the most— sex workers on the highways in cities and tribals in North-East. The NGOs and various state-level AIDS control societies I have come across are there just to mint money. They are not bothered if the AIDS awareness has reached the vulnerable people in the states."

Before this crusader continues his mega journey, he informs that he has met over 10,000 sex workers and their only lament is that they didn't want to enter flesh trade, but they have no other means of sustaining them. "They know about AIDS, but their clients never allow them to use condoms," he discloses, pointing out towards the hazards of AIDS among the youth. The situation in the North-East is going from bad to worse.

"The clients including army men from Indian mainland and policemen visit the simple tribal women and they are an easy prey for sexual activity. "The AIDS message remains buried in files of AIDS control societies. They have taken to guns as they have seen how their families or relatives were killed in an encounters between security forces and the ultras'," says Somen and adds that he wants to do something for tribal people after he will complete his mission in 2020, the year in which ex-president Dr A.P.J. Kalam's mission of India will also commence.

"I was kicked by a cop at a police post. But terrorists pointed guns on me after they spotted my army shoes, which were given to me by the Assam Rifles. They were pacified when I showed them documents and told them about my mission. I met similar threats from Maoists and LTTE. I told them that safe sex and use of condoms can prevent them catching the virus," he informs.

Somen comes from joint family and is in touch with his parents and friends he's made during the course of his journey. His inspiration comes from an incident when a girl AIDS patient in a nearby village at Basanti died and nobody knew about the deadly virus spreading in the country. "Since then, I worked on AIDS and spread awareness about it in my school and locality. That is how this mission was born," he quips.

"I will come back to India in 2020 and start something that I don't want to share with anyone as of now. I want to become a karmyogi like Vivekananda, my hero and an example of a perfect man in the world," Somen signs off.



Pune Mirror Hindu

Delhi, India, 07.11. 2009

<http://www.punemirror.in/index.aspx?page=article§id=4&contentid=2009110720091107011352469fbf46f9§xslt>

PUNE
MIRROR.in



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Kidnapped by Taliban, saved by spicy curry

Even the Taliban like Indian food! Somen Debnath was travelling across Pakistan and Afghanistan to spread AIDS awareness but was held hostage for 24 days after he was suspected of being a spy. However, he cooked his captors a banquet and was set free

Delhi: An Indian man, who spent 24 days as a captive of the Taliban, has revealed that though he was starved and beaten in Afghanistan, he managed to persuade his tormentors to release him by cooking them curry.

Somen Debnath says he spent more than three weeks blindfolded strapped to a chair in a pitch-black 10ft by 10ft dungeon.

He said that he was travelling through Afghanistan as part of a five-year bicycle ride through 33 countries to promote AIDS awareness.

Armed militants assumed he was a spy and kept him captive in Herat. Unable to understand his captors' commands, Debnath, 28, was regularly beaten for disobeying orders, starved and repeatedly told he was going to die.

But after realizing that one of his captors had a very basic grasp of English, he convinced him to allow him to cook them all a meal.

The Taliban kidnappers were so impressed with his banquet they decided he was "safe" and let him go. Debnath said, "I cooked hot, spicy Indian food for them the way we have it in the Sunderbans.

They were very happy and told my interpreter that I seemed to be a safe guy. In the meantime, I had chatted up the interpreter and through our short exchanges, made it clear that I was just a man who was out on adventure and had no intentions of harming their cause."

FIVE ONE EIGHT

Assam, India, 08.12.2009, <http://ansam518.wordpress.com/2009/11/08/curry-saves-taliban-captive/>

Curry Saves Taliban Captive [...]



Mangalore, Sep 10: He was mistaken for a spy and almost shot at by militants. Sneakers given to him by the Assam Rifles could have proved to be the undoing of his mission. Meet Somen Debnath (23), a resident of Basanti from Sunderbans of West Bengal, aspires to be a globetrotter, albeit with a difference and mission to boot. His mission is to spread awareness on HIV/AIDS and he is cycling around the globe for it. [...]

Taking time off from his tiring journey, Somen interacting with select group of presspersons said he would proceed from Mangalore onwards to Goa and north India. "I intend to meet National Aids Control Organisation officials at Delhi sometime in December and present to them the various inputs that I have gathered about the disease during my tour. I also hope to get an audience with the Prime Minister and President."

He has so far covered 2,517 schools, 1,204 colleges, 28 universities, 46 red light areas and met more than 152 NGOs.

His tour has also seen Somen in the exalted company of 15 Governors and 13 Chief Ministers who have all given him time and helped him.

Bangalore Mirror

**BANGALORE
MIRROR.com**

Bangalore, India, 11.2009

<http://www.bangaloremirror.com/index.aspx?Page=article§name=News%20-%20World§id=12&contentid=200911072009110720532>

Kidnapped by Taliban, saved by spicy curry

Even the Taliban like Indian food! Somen Debnath was travelling across Pakistan and Afghanistan to spread AIDS awareness but was held hostage for 24 days after he was suspected of being a spy. However, he cooked his captors a banquet and was set free [...]



Daily News

**SRI
LANKA**



Colombo, Sri Lanka, 08.03.2006

<http://www.dailynews.lk/2006/03/08/news31.asp>



Somen Debnath rides his cycle
on his long journey. - Picture by
Saman Sri Wedage

Indian cyclist on AIDS awareness mission To visit seven areas in Sri Lanka By Lakmini Rodrigo

COLOMBO: Indian cyclist Somen Debnath who has taken upon himself the task of freeing the world from HIV/AIDS arrived in Sri Lanka last week as another step of his long journey around the world. Born in a small village named Basanti in West Bengal, Debnath began his journey on May 27, 2004, two days after receiving his Bachelor of Science degree (BSc). His goal is to enlighten the public on the disease and eliminate all false fears and wrong attitude about the disease. Somen believes that by healing the minds of people the chances of them luring towards wrong can be decreased, and strives to bring inner calmness towards the youth via many yoga and pranayama exercises. Since 2004 the 23 year old courageous young man has carried out awareness programmes and meditation programmes with the view of healing people's minds and changing their attitudes towards the fatal disease in thousands of institutions. According to Somen who has dedicated his life towards this task, the institutions include 1017 schools, 650 colleges, 24 universities, 93 Non Governmental Organisations (NGO) and 34 brothels. He has travelled over 38,900 kms in 14 states of India, Myanmar and Bhutan and plans to cover eight areas in Sri Lanka focusing on schools and universities. Somen, explaining his reasons for choosing Sri Lanka as his next stop, said that he saw the need of addressing communities where so many ethnic groups were mingled as in Sri Lanka. He answered the question as to what motivated him to take up such a difficult task, saying that a childhood experience had led him to the attempt of saving the world from the deadly disease. Somen said that when he was 14 years of age, he came across an incident where a person had died of AIDS and everyone had declined to touch the corpse. He explained how no one had a correct idea about the disease, and he then realised the timely need for the enlightenment of the public. The areas Somen plans to tour in Sri Lanka included Colombo, Negombo, Kurunegala, Kandy, Kalutara, Panadura and Ratnapura and said that he would be very grateful if any generous person or organisation would come out and assist his priceless task by sponsoring him.



Sunday Observer

Sri Lanka, 12.03.2006

<http://www.sundayobserver.lk/2006/03/12/fea23.html>



Mission to visit all countries by 2020: On the road, *by Vimukthi Fernando*

Peddling 38,900 kilometres through three countries is his record. Having been on his bicycle on the road for two years, he hopes to visit all the countries in the world by 2020 on his mission, before he settles down in his motherland, India. Spending over 15 years of his life on a cause is "not a sacrifice, it is my mission," says Somen Debnath, a 23 year-old graduate from Basnati, a small village in West Bengal, India. His mission - to create awareness on HIV/AIDS among all whom he meets, especially the youth and those involved in risky behaviour due to illiteracy.

Somen is in Sri Lanka to spread his message, raising awareness of HIV/AIDS and promoting Yoga and Pranayama meditation techniques among youth, as a way of life leading to prevention and containment of HIV/AIDS. "Yoga and Pranayama are so powerful that it will develop your faculties and keep you away from risky behaviour," he says. He will travel through Colombo, Negombo, Kurunegala, Kandy, Kegalle, Ratnapura, Kalutara and Panadura taking his message to the youth of Sri Lanka. [...]

His message was "welcome, wherever I went even among the armed groups in India. I was surprised at the welcome by an armed group in Assam. They provided me many opportunities to share the message with the community and young people," says Somen. He had shared his message at over 1000 schools, 650 colleges and 24 universities. It is imperative that the youth gain knowledge of HIV/AIDS, he opines. "I have seen a correlation between the level of education, poverty and HIV/AIDS."

Somen's specialization is in carrying his message to the poor and the illiterate in the rungs. "I was happy to speak with truck drivers on India's national highway and with sex workers, about HIV/AIDS and meditation techniques," says Somen. He had scheduled programmes in 34 centres for sex-workers and 93 NGOs.

What makes him select a bicycle as his mode of transport for his tour around the world, the Sunday Observer questioned him. "It is the most affordable, manageable and durable mode of transport. Easy to maintain, and light. A bicycle can take you places where no other vehicle can go. Besides, I know my way is full of peril and sometimes I might have to cross rivers and jungles. Then, all what I have to do is to carry the bicycle and walk or swim across," smiles Somen.

Any unforgettable experiences on his bicycle? From the many experiences he relates about traversing 275 kilometres through thick forest and sparsely populated villages, from Manipur to Nagaland in India. The road, travelled by a maximum number of three motor-vehicles per day, was shared with elephants, rhinos and leopards, he reminisces. "It was only determination that carried me through. I strongly felt the power of nature and god." Pix. by Chinthaka Kumarasinghe



Uzbekistan

Uzbekistan Today



07.11.2009 Tashkent, Uzbekistan, 29.02.2008

http://www.ut.uz/eng/kaleidoscope/trip_penetrated_with_care_for_mankind.mgr

Trip penetrated with care for mankind,

By Pulat Juraev

Tashkent is a usual intermediate place on routes of travelers who carry out extremely far cycle tours with various goals. The twenty-four year old Somen Debnath from Basanti, a village in Sunderban province (Western Bengal, India) that is famous for its mangrove forests and tiger reserves is making a world tour named "Around the World Bi-Cycle Tour for HIV/AIDS Awareness Program". [...]

"I have developed a three-hour program where I use video materials on VIV infection and records on Indian culture. It also includes a sixty-minute documentary on HIV/AIDS: the youth must not only have idea of this dangerous disease but also know ways of controlling the situation and avoiding it". The inner assurance and philosophical point of view on life that is typical of the Indian are not enough to make such a world tour which Somen Debnath intends to finish in 2020 but it requires real support of various organizations.

"Organizations interested in the project and businessmen help me", says Somen Debnath. "However, people whom are talk to on my way mainly support me. In each country I aspire to feel as a native inhabitant: I am an Uzbek in Uzbekistan and a Russian in Russia. It is the best way to know peoples' cultures and traditions.

My tour consists of three components: sports, tourism and lecture. Its sports activity is that I exclusively travel by bicycle on land. I have already mentioned its lecture part. And tourism is everyday discovery of something new for me. In the eighth grade at school I read about Samarkand and Bukhara. It is the God's gift for me that I have been to Samarkand and saw with my eyes all those things which I read before. Generally, I have made a long trip across Uzbekistan: I moved from Sariasiya to Tashkent through Denau, Termez, Karshi, Samarkand and Syrdarya. Cordiality of the Uzbek is more than hospitality. Here I feel love and kindness".

S. Debnath's ringing sell phone interrupted our conversation. He talked with his caller for a long time and then said that "someone called him from Denau and asked how my things were going on".

Somen Debnath has lots of things to do in Tashkent; therefore he is to spend twelve days here. Then he will go to Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Eastern and Western Europe, Middle East and Africa.

Good luck and happy journey, Somen! 29.02.2008 01:16 • read 617 times



HUNGARY

NÉPSZABADSÁGONLINE

Budapest, Hungary, 18.12.2009

http://nol.hu/lap/arcok/20091218-16_ev_nyeregben

Somen Debnath, az indiai világutazó,
Kocsis Zoltán



16 év nyeregben, [Kőműves Anita](#) | Népszabadság

Széles mosoly és közvetlenség a recept, ha Somen Debnath, az indiai világutazó ki akar keveredni a bajból. Hogy ez egy grúz házibuliban működött, amikor a méltatlankodó szomszédokat kellett leszerelni, nem meglepő. Ő azonban nem sokkal később még a tálibok fogságából is „kidumálta” magát.

SERBIA

24 News

Belgrade, Serbia, 07.11.2009



<http://www.24sata.hr/fun-i-sexy/talibani-pustili-zatocenika-jer-im-je-skuhao-dobro-jelo/143637/>

Píše: Magdalena Mucić

Somen Debnath (28) iz Indije putovao je biciklom kroz 33 zemlje kako bi upozorio na opasnosti AIDS-a. Put koji je trebao trajati uskoro završiti, prekinuli su prošlog mjeseca talibani u Afganistanu misleći da je špijun te su ga zatočili u tamnicu na 24 dana s povezom preko očiju i vezanog za stolicu. Kako nije razumio naredbe talibana, stalno su ga tukli i izgladnjivali. Mislio je da će ga u konačnici i ubiti. Jedan od militantata znao je ponešto Engleskog pa ga je Somen nagovorio da ga pusti da im skuha ručak. Navodno su svi bili toliko oduševljeni jelom da su zaključili kako je mladić bezopasan i pustili ga.

- Skuhao sam im ljuto indijsko jelo koje ih je sve razveselilo. Talibanu koji je znao Engleski u međuvremenu sam objasnio da sam obični mladić u pustolovini. Mislim da je on to prenio šefovima - kaže mladić koji je iz Indije na 5-godišnji put krenuo 2004. godine. Do 2020. želi posjetiti 191 zemlju i prenijeti informacije o AIDS-u. (SWNS)



CNNiReport

Bosnia, 19.12.2009

<http://www.ireport.com/docs/DOC-371164>

CNNiReport

WORLD NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT THIS GREAT MAN !!!

Posted by: [FeridaBosnia](#)

Five days ago, young man asked me to host him for a few days. I said yes. I never thought that his visit will change my life.

His name is Somen Debnath (age 26) and he is from India. Five years ago, he started his 'Around the World Bicycle Tour for HIV/AIDS Awareness Programme & Presentation of Indian Culture'. His goal is to reach 191 country in year 2020.

'Mission impossible for me', I thought to myself. But, not to him. His philosophy is simple: 'God is in every man and with God he travels'.

My country (Bosnia and Herzegovina) is 41-st that he visited until now. Amount of Love which he carries can't be explained with words. From him, my family and I got a great knowledge on life. There is something sacred in him, and his visit to my home was like a great cosmic travel for me. He is so simple, and yet so Great!

Somen left my town yesterday. He continues his journey on bicycle, although the weather conditions are very difficult.

My whole country is covered by snow. I'm sitting in my warm home, and I wonder which cause could persuade me to go on a journey under this snowstorm. Although I know that he has no questions like I do,

I still wonder, where is Somen now...

BOSNIA



TURKEY



Nethaber

Istanbul, Turkey, 07.07.2009

<http://www.nethaber.com/Dunya/121925/Yaptigi-bir-YEMEK-ile-Taliban-esaretinden-kurtuldu>



Yaptığı bir YEMEK ile Taliban esaretinden kurtuldu, ilişkili Başlıklar

AIDS'e karşı farkındalığı artırmak için çıktığı dünya turunda 33 ülkede pedal çeviren ve son olarak Afganistan'a giden Hintli Somen Debnath (28), Herat'da Taliban'a esir düştü [...]



Others cover, we expose...



Gracac News

Croatia

24.09.2009

http://www.ss-gracac.skole.hr/?news_id=32#mod_news



Somen Debnath from India

U četvrtak, 24.09.2009., Srednja škola Gračac ugostila je neobičnog gosta, 26-godišnjeg Indijca rođenog u malom selu u blizini Calcute. Somen Debnath putuje svijetom na svom biciklu promovirajući indijsku kulturu i budeći svijest o prijeko potrebnoj borbi protiv AIDS-a. Njegovo putovanje započelo je u svibnju 2004., a cilj mu je posjetiti 191 državu do 2020.

U našoj školi održao je jednosatno predavanje u prepunoj informatičkoj dvorani. Uz pomoć projektora i zanimljivih fotografija Somen Debnath nas je, barem nakratko, uveo u egzotičan svijet indijske kulture, običaja i religije.

Nesvakidašnji gost izazvao je živo zanimanje kod učenika i nastavnika, ponajprije svojim izborom načina života. U svakom slučaju, bilo je ovo dobrodošlo osvježanje u svakodnevnicu Srednje škole Gračac

AUSTRIA

Nachbarschaftsgarten

Viena, Austria, 07.11.2009

<http://nachbarschaftsgarten.wordpress.com/>



Somen im Garten

Somen Debnath aus Indien radelt seit 2004 für ein Bewußtsein für die Immunschwächekrankheit Aids und friedvolles Leben um die Welt. Im Garten hat er kurzen Stopp zum Laubzusammenrechen gemacht. Herbstlichen Dank (vor allem Somens Couchgeberin Barbara) und gute Fahrt.



Greece

Athens News



Athens, Greece, 02.08.2009

<http://www.athensnews.gr/articles/13349/02/08/2009/1420>



Cyclist keeps his head in Aids campaign

[Carl Mauzy](#) Issue No. 13349

[...] **Sunny disposition**

The disarmingly positive cyclist has been on the road now for five years with his global awareness-raising mission. [...]

Now in Athens, Debnath has worn out three bikes and is on his fourth, a gift from a Bulgarian mountain bike association. After having covered more than 70,000km on two wheels, he has given lectures on HIV/Aids to Indian and Bangladeshi communities around the Greek capital.

He has also made numerous pit stops throughout Greece. In Larissa, he sat down with a group of stoneworkers, and spoke to youth at a music festival in Kozani.

In some countries though, talking about Aids is near impossible. Trying to raise awareness in Islamic countries such as Pakistan and Afghanistan can be troublesome, to say the least.

Sex

In these places, sex can't be mentioned when talking about Aids. So the focus instead has to be on the deadliness of the disease. The greatest challenge though comes on a more personal level.

"During my travel, if I meet some very negative people, it is my challenge, and I always want to think how to make them more positive," Debnath said. At age 14, Debnath came across an article that inspired him.

"I read in the newspaper about an HIV victim, not far from my village," he said. "That article urged me to take the path I am on."

Two years after that experience, the teenage boy was already busy raising Aids awareness in his area.

With the European leg of his tour just beginning, and Africa, the Americas and Eastern Asia still ahead, Debnath faces substantial challenges. And yet, he remains committed to his strategy.

"I think it will be easier for me if I take it step by step."



BULGARIA

OFFROAD

<http://forum.offroad-bulgaria.com/showthread.php?t=59239>

Среща с пътешественик

В тази тема ще разкажа за среща с един интересен човек - Somen Debnath. Индиец. Обикалящ света с колело. Не, това не е поредният колоездач, тръгнал на околосветско пътешествие. Той не обикаля Земята, а просто Света... Кратките маршрути и преки пътища не го интересуват. До тук близо 5 години, по план му остават още около 11...

MTB



Bulgaria, 10.04.2009

<http://www.mtb-bg.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=3&t=52765> (MTB-Bulgaria)

Somen Debnath - Around The World Bi-Cycle Tour

Моята тема са мотоциклетите и пътешествията с тях, но днес следобед карайки по околосветския път на София, забелязах момче с колело, което очевидно идваше отдалеч. Спрях и се заговорихме. Somen Debnath, така се казва. Пътува от Индия с един хъм, доста окаян велосипед. Пристигнал е вчера. Май са го пообрали в София ... Посетил е посолството на Индия и се е оправил.

Bull Photo Events

<http://bulphoto.com/events/16842/>

Събития

Пътешественик индиец продължава околосветската си обиколка с български велосипед



ROMANIA

Media Unibuc

University of Bucharest, Romania, 07.03.2010

<http://media.unibuc.ro/index.php/stirile-universitatii/505-somen-debnath-indianul-care-face-inconjurul-lumii-pe-bicicleta-vine-sa-vorbeasca-cu-studentii-la-universitatea-din-bucuresti>



Somen Debnath, indianul care face înconjurul lumii pe bicicletă, vine sa vorbească cu studenții la Universitatea din București

Vineri, 5 martie 2010, orele 17.00, Somen Debnath vine, cu bicicleta pe care străbate lumea, la Facultatea de Sociologie și Asistență Socială a Universității din București, pentru a vorbi despre impactul pe care HIV/SIDA îl are asupra întregii lumi și despre modul în care discriminarea și lipsa de informații referitoare la HIV/SIDA afectează viața celor care trăiesc cu această infecție.

Evenimentul Zilei



Bucuresti, Romania, 07.03.2010

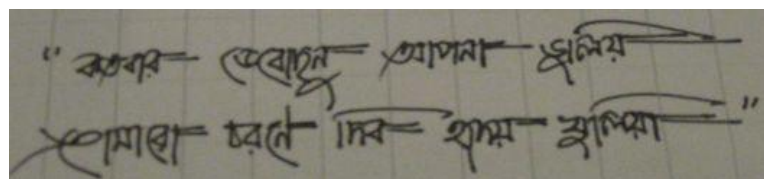
<http://www.evz.ro/detalii/stiri/78000-de-kilometri-pe-bicicleta-si-drumul-nu-e-gata-888702.html>

78.000 de kilometri pe bicicletă. Și drumul nu e gata, Dan Arsenie

Dacă îl întrebi câți ani are, îi place să spună 264. În buletin, are abia 26. Indianul Somen Debnath este în



al șaselea an de călătorie, iar cele patru biciclete l-au purtat din țara sa natală până în România.



tale. Vreau să îți dau totul, numai să îmi dai ocazia să o fac. Dar cel mai mult mi-aș dori să fiu parte din tine.

Traducere: Doamne, aș vrea să îmi aștern inima la picioarele