

PRESS RELEASE

FROM GATWICK TO THE HIMALAYA 2010
RAFT. TREK. BIKE...



London Gatwick, 12th January 2011 – An intrepid and like-minded team from the Sofitel London Gatwick have returned from the mountains and valleys of Nepal. During their nine day sojourn in December, the team members travelled across the snow-capped Himalayan country in support of two community aid projects.

In early December the nine-strong team flew to Kathmandu and made their way by raft, trek and bike to a rural community school for underprivileged children and a hospital catering for patients with disabilities. “The team members were absolutely determined to make a difference to other people’s lives and, besides raising a significant amount of financial support for the past few months, were prepared to renounce their usual creature comforts and to participate in the physical challenges of a mini-expedition taking them into remote territory” said Matthew Lindenfelser, tour organizer. He further added: “The team managed to attract pledges from individual and corporate well-wishers and were able to finance wheelchairs through INF Nepal and to initiate an ICT suite at the Pokhara Viewpoint Primary School with a grand total of 226,218 Nepalese Rupees (GBP £2,038) reaching the local communities in Nepal”.

Dubbed the ‘Staff Outing’ with a difference, the fully self-financed team visited Nepal to combine a unique adventure travel destination with an exercise in corporate social responsibility (CSR). Travelling along ancient trade routes, the team of mixed ages and abilities experienced breathtaking panoramic views and captured every opportunity to interact with the locals and experience some very different cultures.

“We are grateful for your kind support supporting the future of the children and the community”, said Matrika Prasad Baral, Headmaster of the PVP School near Pokhara, while Superintendent Dr. Paul Roche from INF Nepal added “the generosity of the donation will change five individual’s lives considerably and facilitate their rehabilitation process.”



“Project-managing the expedition from start to finish has been a challenge and pleasure alike and demonstrates the unique team strength and dynamic resourcefulness staff are displaying across all the departments at the Sofitel London Gatwick in these difficult times”, said Matthew Lindenfelser, tour organizer, and added, “above all the project is a showcase for exercising solidarity with our fellow humans and it has been both humbling and rewarding to complete the journey at Christmas time when caring for and sharing with others are most on our mind.”

The team are mostly based at the 4 star deluxe Sofitel London Gatwick, which is connected directly to the North Terminal by covered walkway offering convenient access. The team commented: “Working at this truly cosmopolitan property at one of the world's busiest airports created the idea of putting something back into society by way of inter-departmental team-building and initiating a small Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) project supported by a number of businesses, including, but not limited to, Arora Hotels Ltd., Sofitel London Gatwick and Mercure London Gatwick. Since we have returned from Nepal and having seen the precariousness of some individuals' situation has stressed the need for a longer-term vision on supporting their needs with Know-How, Training and Humanitarian aid. We truly hope that we have created a successful travel template which can be used by other organizations and individuals to combine a great cause with a fascinating journey.”

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Sofitel is the only French luxury hotel brand with a presence on five continents with 120 addresses, in almost 40 countries (more than 30 000 rooms). Sofitel offers contemporary hotels and resorts adapted to today's more demanding and more versatile consumers who expect and appreciate beauty, quality and excellence. Whether situated in the heart of a major city like Paris, London, New York or Beijing, or nestled away in a country landscape in Morocco, Egypt, Fiji Islands or Thailand, each Sofitel property offers a genuine experience of the French "art de vivre".

About Arora Hotels – www.arorahotels.com

Arora Hotels is an independent hotel company owned and founded by Surinder Arora in 1999. It is the UK's leading specialist hotelier to the airline industry and one of the fastest growing private hotel companies in the UK.

The company has made a name for itself through the design, construction and operation of luxury hotels, with exceptional levels of hospitality.

Their portfolio currently comprises seven hotels with over 2500 bedrooms. Prime locations include the Arora Hotel – Heathrow, Arora Park – Heathrow, Arora Hotel – Gatwick/Crawley, Arora Hotel – Manchester city centre, the recently opened 605 bedroom Sofitel London Heathrow, directly connected to the iconic Terminal 5 (recently voted 'Best New Business Hotel In The World' at the Business Traveller Awards 2009 and 'Best Airport Hotel In The World' at the Business Traveller US Awards 2009), Sofitel London Gatwick at the North Terminal and Mercure London Gatwick. Both Sofitels and Mercure London Gatwick are operated under a franchise agreement with Accor Hospitality.

At The Brit Oval, Arora is currently working in partnership with Surrey County Cricket Club on the development of a four-star, 168 bedroom hotel.

The property arm of the Arora Group – Arora Management Services – is involved in property asset management of a portfolio of landmark office buildings at key UK airports

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