DARJEELING, INDIA BROUGHT TO A STANDSTILL BY FINALE OF THE .travel SPONSORED RICKSHAW RUN
Teams Complete 2,000-Mile Charity Trek Through India

London (January 16, 2007) – Despite exploding engines and bent chassis, challenging off-road mountain tracks, and extreme climates from searing heat to freezing fog, 30 teams from around the world arrived in Darjeeling to complete the first-ever **.travel** sponsored Rickshaw Run charity adventure.

The hill station of Darjeeling was brought to a standstill on Friday by the sight of the procession of tiny three-wheeled auto rickshaws making their way through the steep foothills of the Himalayas in to town, marking the end of the charity adventure.

34 teams from seven countries left Cochin, in southern India, on December 28, 2006 to embark on a one-of-a-kind adventure that would take them through 2,000 miles of India's wildest terrain. Completing the journey without any established support system, teams faced numerous challenges along the way including mechanical problems, rough roads, wild jungle, intense climate and even uncooperative animals.

Exhausted and dirty, the teams arrived in Darjeeling on January 12 to be greeted by locals and enjoy a parade held to celebrate the completion of charity adventure.

"I can't quite believe what we just did! I've been to India many times before but on this trip I've seen a whole lot more of the country and visited parts where no tourists have ever been," shared one participant.

"We're proud to be a part of incredible and worthy events like the Rickshaw Run," said Ron Andruff, president of **.travel,** the Internet domain dedicated to the travel and tourism industry. "The event embodies what travel is all about. The teams were able to fully experience India, its people, culture and land, all while helping the local community."

Another Rickshaw Run team member added, "The highlight for me has been the generosity and kindness of the people we¹ve met along the way. I'm delighted to be standing here on the finish line in one piece."

The journey would not have been possible without the help and support of the Indian people across the country. Many teams say the intense trek was made feasible with the constant help and support from the generosity and kindness of people in the local communities along the way.

The Rickshaw Run was created and organized by the Institute of Adventure Research. Managing Director, Tom Morgan, who also took part in the run, said "For many months people have been telling me the Rickshaw Run was not possible, so I have to say I'm delighted and a little smug to be standing here with 30 teams who all arrived in the two weeks. This is the first-

ever Rickshaw Run and while I knew it would be a great adventure, I had a lot more fun than I expected. The event has been a huge success, raising over $70,000 US for charity."

Morgan added "Before the teams had even finished we started getting emails from people around the world asking how to sign up for the next one. We are going to make it even harder next year though, spanning pretty much the whole of the Himalayan range. The details will be released on our website along with other events, like the Mongol Rally, which challenges teams to drive from London to Mongolia in sub 1-litre cars."

The Rickshaws from the event will be distributed to families in need in the state of West Bengal, home to the city of Darjeeling, in conjunction with a local partner. With the donated autos, families will be able to use the rickshaws as taxis and avoid the difficulties often faced with high rental fees or expensive loans to obtain an auto. The additional funds raised by the teams will be donated to Darjeeling Earth Group, an Indian NGO. The money will contribute to a project working to bring small private organic tea farmers in poor rural areas together to increase their standard of living, quality of production and chances for a successful and sustainable future.

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More information about the Rickshaw Run and the teams, along with high-resolution photography (available for download), can be found at **www.rickshawrun.travel.**

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The Institute of Adventure Research – 'making the world less boring'
The Institute of Adventure Research is an adventure events specialist committed to raising money for charity and creating opportunities that can't be found in a high street travel agent's window or in a tour guide's brochure. Participants enjoy the combination of camaraderie between teams and an extreme common goal while retaining complete control over their own journey.

Teams are entirely responsible for their own welfare and the organizer provides no back up once teams are on the road. The flagship event is the Mongol Rally, the hugely popular budget banger rally that challenges teams to drive a quarter of the way round the world in a 1-litre car that most people wouldn't use for the shopping run. In July 2006 167 teams left London to take on the beast… The event website is currently being revamped but will be back online soon: www.mongolrally.com