

Adventure Diplomacy Group Hosts Premiere of Record Breaking Everest Journey

Islamabad, Thursday 5 March 2015 – In May 2013, Samina Baig made headlines around the world when she summited Mount Everest. Her brother, Mirza Ali, who had accompanied her on the trek to Everest, stayed back at the Everest Basecamp while she conquered the mountain, thus making a powerful statement about women's empowerment.

After the pair returned from Mount Everest, Serena Hotels founded the Adventure Diplomacy Group to help turn the siblings' dream of becoming the world's first siblings to conquer seven of the world's highest peaks across seven continents into reality. The Group, consisting of Embassies of the Argentine Republic, Republic of Indonesia, Nepal, Russian Federation, United States of America, along with Serena Hotels, aimed to facilitate and sponsor Samina and Mirza's journey across the world to promote peace, gender equality, women empowerment youth development and environmental awareness. On Thursday, 24 July 2014 at 9:00 am (local time), an excited Mirza announced via satellite phone that he and his sister had hoisted the green flag of Pakistan on top of Mount Elbrus (5,642m), their final peak.

On Thursday, the Adventure Diplomacy Group hosted an exclusive screening of the much anticipated documentary of mountaineer and national icon, Samina Baig's journey to the top of Mount Everest. The premiere of the documentary was attended by business leaders, government officials and diplomats from across Islamabad. A beaming Mirza, who had filmed the footage for the documentary, spoke before the screening. He said, "Pakistan's youth is brimming with promise. It is a pleasure to unveil tonight, how much my sister -- one of the strongest women I know -- has accomplished through perseverance. All Pakistani women are capable of this strength. We must support them in all their endeavors." Mirza had stayed behind in May 2013 is preparing to summit Mount Everest this year in April.

The Ambassador of Nepal H.E. Mr. Bharat Raj Paudyal delivered the welcome note. He said, "Mountaineering is a tough challenge anywhere in the world and it becomes tougher both physically and logistically when you aim for the highest point on earth. By their perseverance and commitment, Samina and Mirza have achieved something that serves as an inspiration to the youth of Pakistan." The documentary opened with spellbinding shots of Mirza and Samina's hometown in Shimshal, a valley in Upper Hunza. The audience fell silent as they watched Samina's courage play out on screen as she traveled against great odds from her village in Hunza to the summit of Mount Everest.

Following the event, Ambassador of the United States, H.E. Richard Olson said, "Every March, we celebrate Women's History Month in the United States to recognize the contributions of women to all aspects of our society. Samina's achievements on and off the summits are an inspiration to all of us. *Beyond the Heights* provides an excellent example of how one woman can make a difference in her community, in her country, and across the globe." The Dean of Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Argentina, H.E. Rodolfo Martin Saravia also lauded Samina's courage and dedication, "Samina has, at such a young age, written history in the field of sports and mountaineering. This was possible because of her own spirit and strength and because of her family's support. She and Mirza are a symbol of pride for Pakistanis all over the world."

After the screening ended, Mr. Aziz Boolani stressed the importance of highlighting individuals such as Mirza and Samina in Pakistan, he said, "The young generation is so full of promise. We at Serena Hotels hope to continue highlighting their achievements and bringing them up to a public platform. Pakistan has a lot to offer. Samina and Mirza have showcased their personal strength and courage as well as our country through this film. While doing so, they have also reached the top of the world."

The Adventure Diplomacy Group will host another screening in the upcoming months of Mirza and Samina's Seven Summits and Seven Continents journey.

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ABOUT THE ADVENTURE DIPLOMACY GROUP --The Adventure Diplomacy Group (ADG), consisting of the Embassies of Republic of Argentina, Republic of Indonesia, Nepal, Russian Federation, United States of America, and the Serena Hotels was formed to support Pakistani mountaineering siblings Samina and Mirza Ali Baig on the Adventure Diplomacy Expedition. Each Ambassador member of the ADG has agreed to provide logistical support and promotional assistance to the siblings during their visit to their respective countries. Serena Hotels supported the mountaineers' visit to Tanzania for their Mt. Kilimanjaro climb.

ABOUT SAMINA & MIRZA ALI BAIG – Samina Baig and Mirza Ali are natives of Shimshal, a valley deep in Upper Hunza near the border of China. Thirty year old Mirza has been climbing mountains for the last 12 years. He works as a mountain guide, expedition leader, and trainer in the Karakorum, Himalaya, and Hindukush. Samina Baig is a 22 year old student. She is currently the only female Pakistani mountaineering professional. She made history on May 19, 2013 when she became the first Pakistani woman to summit Mt Everest, the highest mountain in the world. Together, their aim is to empower women through adventure sports and to encourage them towards mountain exploration.

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