

MECHUKHA

Dear Reader,

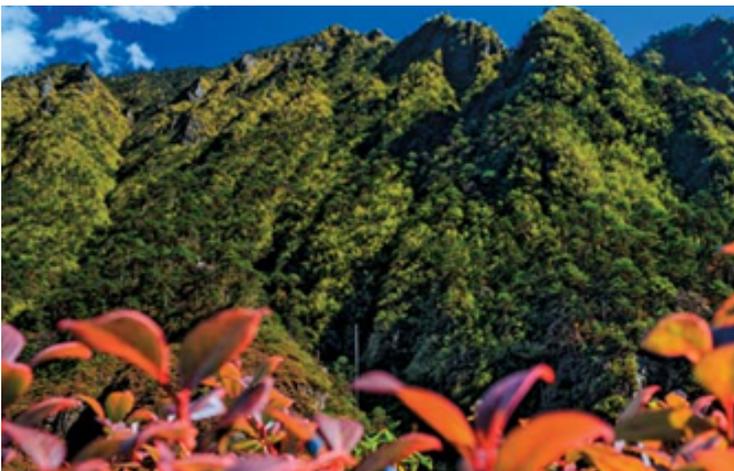
As yet another summer season comes knocking, Mechukha is once again getting ready to receive niche interest travellers to soak in its resplendent beauty. The best way to explore this beautiful destination, is to do so on foot. We're talking about treks!

Mechukha offers some interesting short and long haul treks that help you take a closer look at nature, people's lives and lifestyles. This month, we present the treks that can be done at Mechukha.

- **Liya Bagra** I.A.S., Deputy Commissioner, Shi-Yomi District & Chairman-Destination Management Committee-Mechukha

TREKKING IN MECHUKHA

There are treks, and there's trekking at Mechukha in Arunachal Pradesh's Shi Yomi District. An unforgettable experience awaits nature lovers - those who simply love to merge with natural landscapes away from the world. Mechukha, tucked into a far corner of India's mesmerizing north east is a land of charming country side grassland hills and valleys. A combination of gentle climbs and tough terrain



along the various trekking trails in Mechukha take you through lush greenery, dense forests and the occasional crossing of paths with the graceful Siang river, which are beautiful by itself. But what makes Mechukha's trekking trails are its charming villages.

Trekkers can explore the unique culture of Mechukha by interacting with the local tribes and observing and participating (at times) in their traditional lifestyles - call it a nature-cultural immersive experience!

TREK TO PASANG SONAM TSO:

Pasang Sonam Tso is a stunningly beautiful high-altitude lake near Mechukha. Over the years, it has become a sought-after trail for hikers in the Eastern Himalayas. The journey begins with a drive from Mechuka to the ITBP check-post at Yorlung - a challenging terrain that is rewarded with breathtaking views. Trekkers will navigate near-vertical patches, climb bamboo ladders and cross streams - all while surrounded by forests and blueberry bushes.



Essential:

The trek spans three days requiring trekkers to plan for at least two nights' of sleeping in outdoor camps and living on basic food like Maggi, biscuits, sandwiches and fruits. Carry adequate quantity of water, essential medication and first aid kits.

As temperatures can dip owing to altitude and forest cover, it is recommended to carry warm clothing.

It is advisable to engage in physical training before embarking on this medium-to-tough grade trek.

Note: *Trekking to Pasang Soman requires special permission for trekking. Travelling to Arunachal Pradesh requires travellers to secure an In Land Permit.*



The trail includes campsites like Ummeed Camp, Shastri Camp, and culminates at Pasang Sonam Tso, offering a picturesque camping spot by the lake. One of the highlights while on the trek is the opportunity to access fresh glacier-melt water which can be used for drinking / cooking. It's as pure as that!



Best Time:

Summer (July–September): Warmer weather, longer days for more leisurely walks.

Fall Winter: (October– December): The driest season. Colder temperatures, sub-zero at night. Shorter days, longer nights, so schedule walks accordingly. Snowfall is a possibility. Frost begins mid-November.

Peak winter (January– Feb): Even shorter days. More technical. Prepare for tricky patches through snow.

TREK TO THE RINJINLING MOUNTAINS

The Mechuka mountain, also known as 'Mechuka La', is positioned on the eastern bank of the Yargyap Chu river, providing an expansive view of the entire valley. A thrilling and relatively short hike to the mountain's summit involves traversing meadow ridges and rolling hills along narrow grassy trails. The ascent, comprising both gradual and steep sections, can be completed in a few hours, depending on fitness levels. The scenery and photographic opportunities improve with elevation, and upon reaching the open and windy summit, breath-



-taking panoramic views unfold before your eyes. For those who cannot take the longer and more difficult Pasang Sonam Lake trek, the Mechuka La trek is a fantastic opportunity to engage in an experience of a lifetime. Descending from the summit, the journey continues to the other side of the mountain, leading to the adjoining valley where another unforgettable highlight awaits - Dorjeeling village. One of the most beautiful rural villages in postcard-perfect settings, Dorjeeling village offers unique views straight out of Scotland. Just outside Mechuka, the highlight of this sparsely populated hamlet is its charming

wooden huts scattered across wide open grasslands. This is rustic rural charm at its surreal best!

One can see horses grazing on the meadows, a small monastery, rickety hanging bridges - a characteristic feature in this part of India, and a gentle, shallow crystal-clear stream flowing on stony river beds. It's an unexpected sight, and thus delightfully unforgettable.



FESTIVALS

SONAM LOSAR (25 - 26 January)

During the Tibetan regime, each household of the Memba tribe under Kongpo Agegap were to send one male for war. With their return from the battlefield uncertain, the Losar festival was celebrated one month earlier, naming the festival 'Sonam Losar'.

Sonam Losar is an important festival of the Memba of Shi-Yomi District and Upper Siang District of Arunachal Pradesh. In 2024, the festival was celebrated from 25-26 January. Sonam Losar is celebrated to bid farewell to the year past, and to greet the coming year for a happy and prosperous life.



The three day festival saw several traditions and customs on display:

On day one, "Nangmay Losar" was celebrated by the Memba community among their family at home.

Day two of Sonam Losar called " Lamay Losar", was marked by the Membas going to the Gompa or monastery to pray for the long life of all beings and to get blessings from the Spiritual Lamas. This was followed by visiting homes and celebrations amidst amusements, songs and dances. Games and sports like arrow shooting, shot put, and discuss throw were also played in a competitive spirit.

On day three, "Drongba Losar" was commemorated by hoisting the Buddhist flags at their houses. Cultural programs and concerts were also performed by artists like Tsering Grurmey, Tenzing Yangi.



SWADESH DARSHAN 2.0 UPDATES

TOURISM AWARENESS PROGRAM

The Department of Tourism, Government of Arunachal Pradesh organized an awareness programme on Tourism Destination Development as part of Swadesh Darshan 2.0. The event took place at the Convention Centre Tourist Lodge in Mechukha, Barangang, Shi-Yomi district.



Ms. Rita Yorung, the District Tourism Officer, emphasized the significance of tourism for Mechukha while extending a warm welcome to the stakeholders and technical teams from the Department of Tourism, including Shri. Gedo Eshi (Deputy Director of Tourism), Shri. T.K Kopak (DTO West Siang), Shri Bishal Aran and Shri Takom Kena.

Deputy Director of Tourism, Mr. Gedo Eshi emphasised the potential of tourism, and benefits the destination can take advantage of. He also dwelt on the importance of community participation in the success of tourism and the need to build a conducive environment for development of the sector in the region.

