

Rough & Rugged Best of Sikkim 11 Nights/12 Days

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"The road never ends ... only our vision does."

01

Arrival at Rangpo and Ride to Gangtok (5500 fts/40 kms/2 hrs)

Arrival at Rangpo, a border town of Sikkim & West Bengal, where you will meet our representative/Guide. A brief introduction of team of Guide/Driver & Mechanic and will accompany you with a support vehicle and head further to Gangtok, the Capital town of Sikkim at an elevation of around 5500 fts, Gangtok is a much more urbanized than any other town in the state is a happening hub for many institutions, corporate offices and many more to name. The precise meaning of the name Gangtok is unclear, though the most popular meaning is "hill top". Today, Gangtok is a centre of Tibetan Buddhist culture and learning, with the presence of several monasteries, religious educational institutions, and center for Tibetology. In the evening time, our representative/Guide will brief the expedition team regarding the trip itinerary, elevation of the places, Road condition, weather condition etc.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

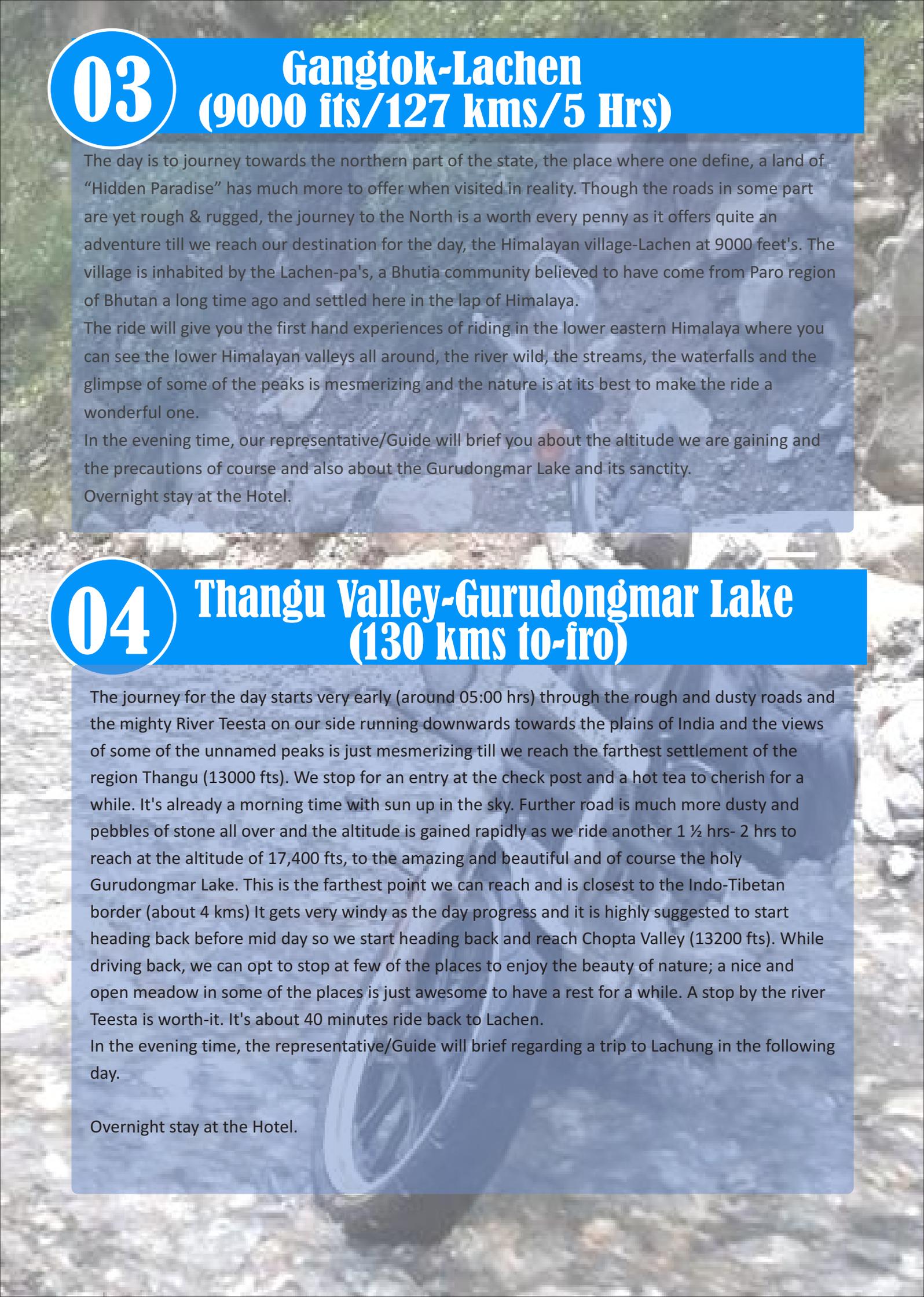
02

Explore Gangtok and surrounding areas (overall 55 kms)

The day starts after the breakfast is served in the Hotel itself. The scheduled for the day is to visit the villages and the monasteries in the surrounding areas, though the ride for the day is not very long, we will have a stoppage at the various places to explore around and experience the ambiances of the place.

The trip starts with a ride to Banjhakri waterfalls & Eco-Park, an initiative of Govt. Of Sikkim under Deptt. Of Tourism is just 08 kms from the town, a park is a nice getaway from a hustle and bustle of the busy town. Further 08 kms through the village of Ranka, we reach one of the beautiful Kagyu sect monastery called Lingdum Zurmang Kharwang Gumpa (1999 A.D) and is one of the most wonderful monasteries in Sikkim. The monastery is spread out in a vast area with great scenic views. Another about 10 kms reaches us to famous Rumtek Monastery/Dharma Chakra center. The monastery belongs to the Kagyu sect of Buddhism built in the mid 1700 A.D. and rebuild in the 1960's by the 16th Gyalwang Karmapa and setting it as the official headquarter in exile after Tshurpu monastery in Tibet. The view of the Gangtok town and the entire valley is seen beautiful from the terrace of one of the building inside the monastery complex. Later we drive back to Gangtok which is 24 kms and while in Gangtok we visit the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (only museum of its kind in whole of India) the museum housed in a traditional Tibetan-style mansion boasts a jaw-dropping collection of artifacts related to Vajrayana Buddhism and Tibetan culture. Established in 1958 to promote scholastic and cultural research, its ground-floor hall displays Buddhist manuscripts, icons, thangkas (Tibetan cloth paintings) and Tantric ritual objects, such as a thöpa (bowl made from a human skull) and kangling (human thighbone trumpet). The library on the 1st floor houses precious Buddhist tomes, some dating back several hundred years. After the visit, we ride back to Hotel. Later in the afternoon, one can opt to ride to Ganesh top and to Tashi view point in the upper part of the town and from where one can enjoy the scenic view of Mt.Khanchendzonga and its ranges. In the evening time, our representative/Guide will brief regarding the trip to North Sikkim and the high altitude alpine zone.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

03

Gangtok-Lachen (9000 fts/127 kms/5 Hrs)

The day is to journey towards the northern part of the state, the place where one define, a land of "Hidden Paradise" has much more to offer when visited in reality. Though the roads in some part are yet rough & rugged, the journey to the North is a worth every penny as it offers quite an adventure till we reach our destination for the day, the Himalayan village-Lachen at 9000 feet's. The village is inhabited by the Lachen-pa's, a Bhutia community believed to have come from Paro region of Bhutan a long time ago and settled here in the lap of Himalaya.

The ride will give you the first hand experiences of riding in the lower eastern Himalaya where you can see the lower Himalayan valleys all around, the river wild, the streams, the waterfalls and the glimpse of some of the peaks is mesmerizing and the nature is at its best to make the ride a wonderful one.

In the evening time, our representative/Guide will brief you about the altitude we are gaining and the precautions of course and also about the Gurudongmar Lake and its sanctity.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

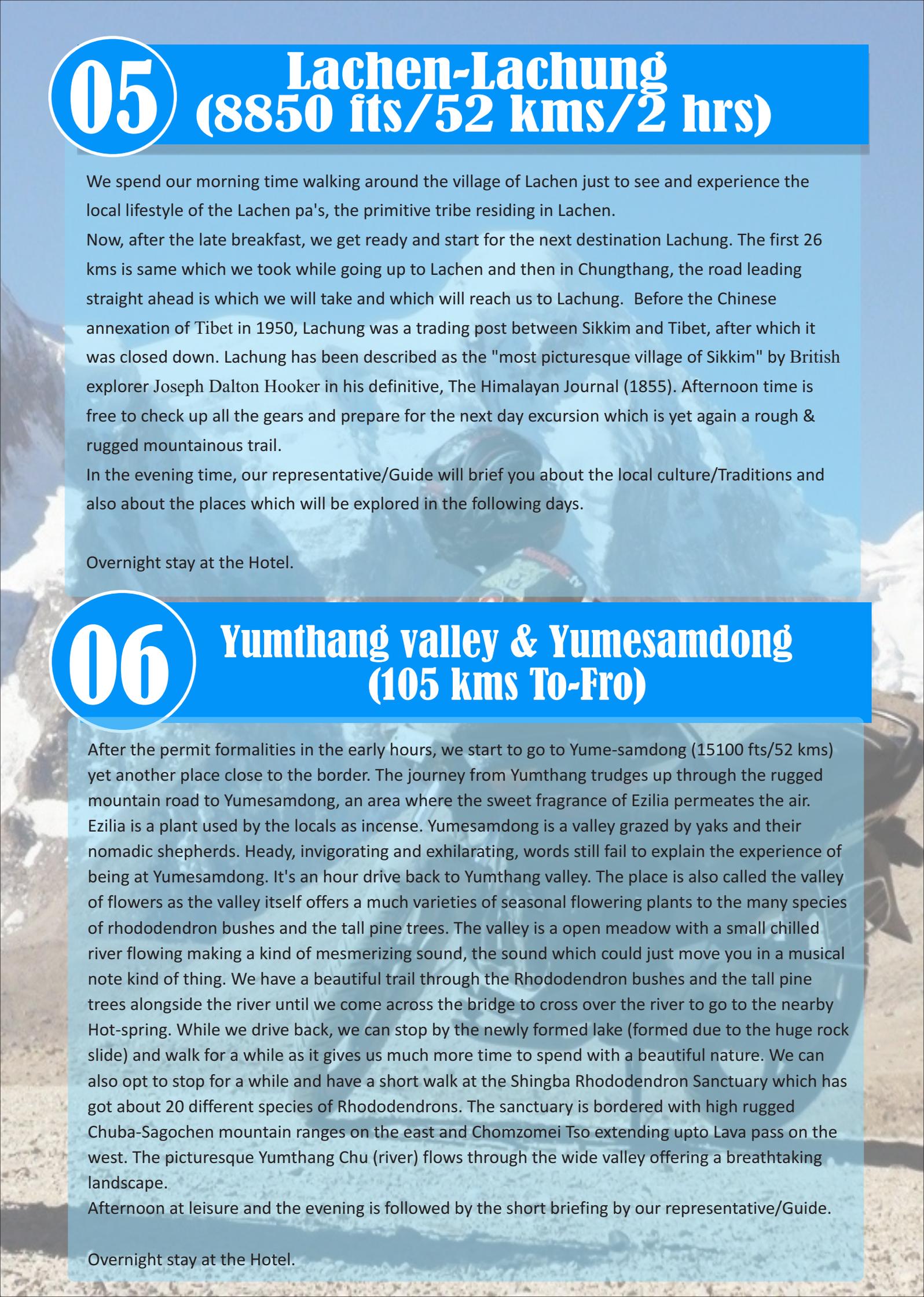
04

Thangu Valley-Gurudongmar Lake (130 kms to-fro)

The journey for the day starts very early (around 05:00 hrs) through the rough and dusty roads and the mighty River Teesta on our side running downwards towards the plains of India and the views of some of the unnamed peaks is just mesmerizing till we reach the farthest settlement of the region Thangu (13000 fts). We stop for an entry at the check post and a hot tea to cherish for a while. It's already a morning time with sun up in the sky. Further road is much more dusty and pebbles of stone all over and the altitude is gained rapidly as we ride another 1 ½ hrs- 2 hrs to reach at the altitude of 17,400 fts, to the amazing and beautiful and of course the holy Gurudongmar Lake. This is the farthest point we can reach and is closest to the Indo-Tibetan border (about 4 kms) It gets very windy as the day progress and it is highly suggested to start heading back before mid day so we start heading back and reach Chopta Valley (13200 fts). While driving back, we can opt to stop at few of the places to enjoy the beauty of nature; a nice and open meadow in some of the places is just awesome to have a rest for a while. A stop by the river Teesta is worth-it. It's about 40 minutes ride back to Lachen.

In the evening time, the representative/Guide will brief regarding a trip to Lachung in the following day.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

05

Lachen-Lachung (8850 fts/52 kms/2 hrs)

We spend our morning time walking around the village of Lachen just to see and experience the local lifestyle of the Lachen pa's, the primitive tribe residing in Lachen.

Now, after the late breakfast, we get ready and start for the next destination Lachung. The first 26 kms is same which we took while going up to Lachen and then in Chungthang, the road leading straight ahead is which we will take and which will reach us to Lachung. Before the Chinese annexation of Tibet in 1950, Lachung was a trading post between Sikkim and Tibet, after which it was closed down. Lachung has been described as the "most picturesque village of Sikkim" by British explorer Joseph Dalton Hooker in his definitive, The Himalayan Journal (1855). Afternoon time is free to check up all the gears and prepare for the next day excursion which is yet again a rough & rugged mountainous trail.

In the evening time, our representative/Guide will brief you about the local culture/Traditions and also about the places which will be explored in the following days.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

06

Yumthang valley & Yumesamdong (105 kms To-Fro)

After the permit formalities in the early hours, we start to go to Yume-samdong (15100 fts/52 kms) yet another place close to the border. The journey from Yumthang trudges up through the rugged mountain road to Yumesamdong, an area where the sweet fragrance of Ezilia permeates the air. Ezilia is a plant used by the locals as incense. Yumesamdong is a valley grazed by yaks and their nomadic shepherds. Heady, invigorating and exhilarating, words still fail to explain the experience of being at Yumesamdong. It's an hour drive back to Yumthang valley. The place is also called the valley of flowers as the valley itself offers a much varieties of seasonal flowering plants to the many species of rhododendron bushes and the tall pine trees. The valley is a open meadow with a small chilled river flowing making a kind of mesmerizing sound, the sound which could just move you in a musical note kind of thing. We have a beautiful trail through the Rhododendron bushes and the tall pine trees alongside the river until we come across the bridge to cross over the river to go to the nearby Hot-spring. While we drive back, we can stop by the newly formed lake (formed due to the huge rock slide) and walk for a while as it gives us much more time to spend with a beautiful nature. We can also opt to stop for a while and have a short walk at the Shingba Rhododendron Sanctuary which has got about 20 different species of Rhododendrons. The sanctuary is bordered with high rugged Chuba-Sagochen mountain ranges on the east and Chomzomei Tso extending upto Lava pass on the west. The picturesque Yumthang Chu (river) flows through the wide valley offering a breathtaking landscape.

Afternoon at leisure and the evening is followed by the short briefing by our representative/Guide.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

07

Lachung-Gangtok (124 kms/5 hrs)

The journey is via same route after we cross the place called Chungthang through the same valleys and rivers and many more with different ambiances. The view of Mt.Khanchendzonga (03rd highest peak in the world) from Singhik adds another joy to the trip and to our heart. Upon arrival at Gangtok, we check into the Hotel, refresh & Relax.

In the evening, our representative/Guide will brief you regarding the further trip.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

08

Silk Route area and to Aritar (4600 fts/140 kms/7 hrs)

After the permit formalities are completed, we head for the alpine Zone of East Sikkim.

The day start after breakfast and the ride through the town and towards the alpine zone, driving through some scenic alpine zones and reaching the height of 12400 fts, our first destination, Tshangu lake, this oval shaped lake is yet again a beautiful one and also a sacred lake where tourist and other people find themselves in a paradise enjoying the Yak ride and nature at its best.

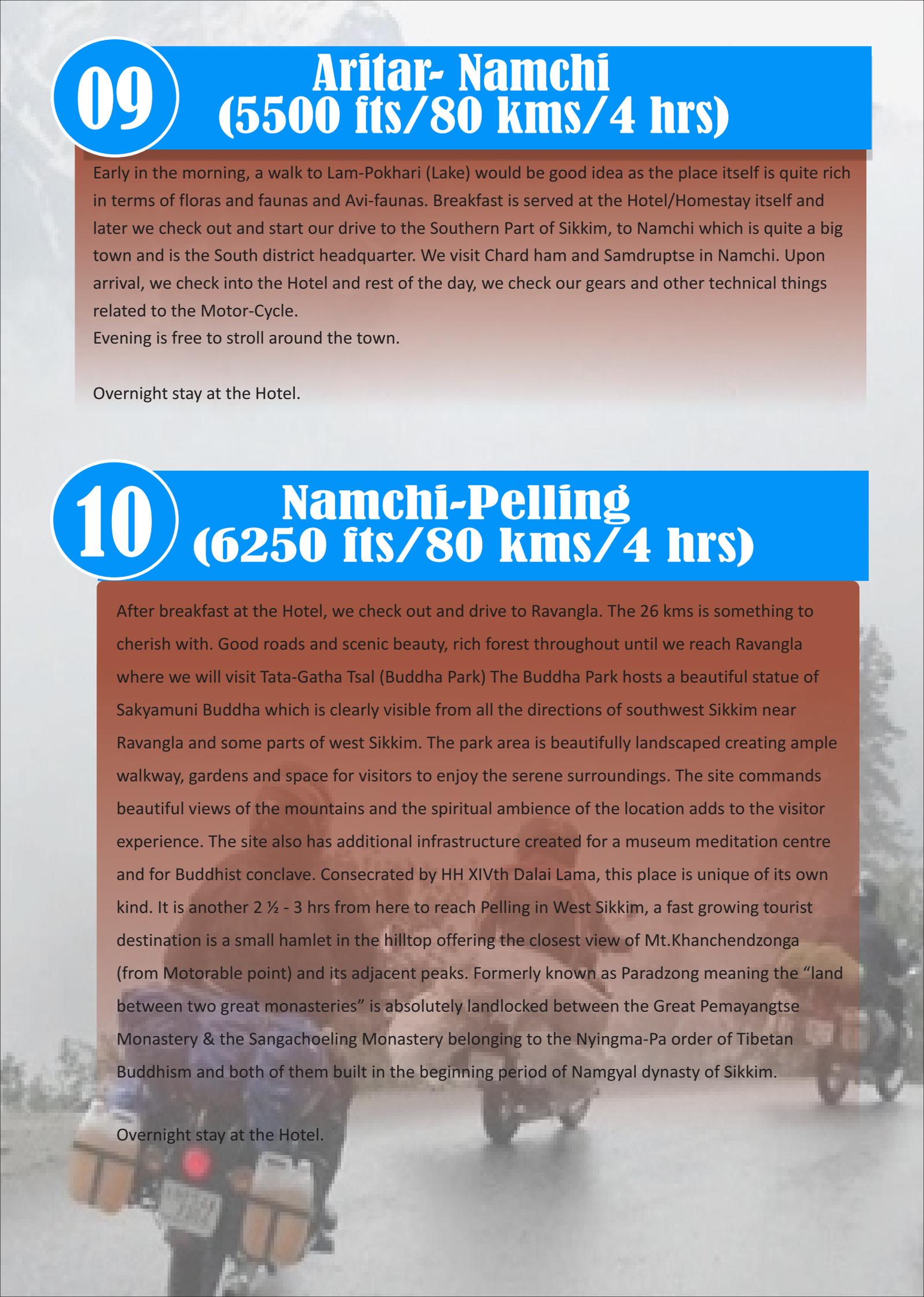
Further drive will reach us to Baba Harbhajan Singh memorial mandir where one can enjoy an open meadow of a high altitude valleys and mountains. Nathula Pass(14500 fts) which is an international border between India and China is little further and hence where one can see the Armies of both Nation in a line of duty in the altitude with much dedication and determination.

Later we start further to the exact "Silk Route" area visiting elephant Lake Enroute and stopping for a cup of tea at Gnathang valley (13500 fts). Another 24 kms will reach us to Zuluk (10,100 fts) which is a small village beside a winding road. It was once a transit point to the historic Silk Route from Tibet to India. Zuluk is a hilltop and a transit point within the Silk Route. The road through Zuluk makes almost 32 hairpin turns which makes it a unique engineering feat. Zuluk has high diversity of Himalayan fauna. The place shelters variety of birds like Monal Pheasant, Blood Pheasant, Khaleez Pheasant, Snow Pheasant and others. You may also catch a glimpse of Himalayan Weasel or A Martin. Sighting of Red Panda, wild dog and deer in the high hills have also been recorded. The drive in these 32 hairpin turns gives a unique experience of lifetime.

As we start our drive downwards losing the altitude, we leave behind the legendary history of "Silk Route" behind and in no time reaching the small town of Rangli and where we have Permit Exit formalities in the local Police station. It is another 30 minutes drive to Aritar.

In the evening time over the dinner table, our representative/Guide will brief you the further itinerary.

Overnight stay in the Hotel/Homestay.



09

Aritar- Namchi (5500 fts/80 kms/4 hrs)

Early in the morning, a walk to Lam-Pokhari (Lake) would be good idea as the place itself is quite rich in terms of floras and faunas and Avi-faunas. Breakfast is served at the Hotel/Homestay itself and later we check out and start our drive to the Southern Part of Sikkim, to Namchi which is quite a big town and is the South district headquarter. We visit Chard ham and Samdruptse in Namchi. Upon arrival, we check into the Hotel and rest of the day, we check our gears and other technical things related to the Motor-Cycle.

Evening is free to stroll around the town.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

10

Namchi-Pelling (6250 fts/80 kms/4 hrs)

After breakfast at the Hotel, we check out and drive to Ravangla. The 26 kms is something to cherish with. Good roads and scenic beauty, rich forest throughout until we reach Ravangla where we will visit Tata-Gatha Tsal (Buddha Park) The Buddha Park hosts a beautiful statue of Sakyamuni Buddha which is clearly visible from all the directions of southwest Sikkim near Ravangla and some parts of west Sikkim. The park area is beautifully landscaped creating ample walkway, gardens and space for visitors to enjoy the serene surroundings. The site commands beautiful views of the mountains and the spiritual ambience of the location adds to the visitor experience. The site also has additional infrastructure created for a museum meditation centre and for Buddhist conclave. Consecrated by HH XIVth Dalai Lama, this place is unique of its own kind. It is another 2 ½ - 3 hrs from here to reach Pelling in West Sikkim, a fast growing tourist destination is a small hamlet in the hilltop offering the closest view of Mt.Khanchendzonga (from Motorable point) and its adjacent peaks. Formerly known as Paradzong meaning the “land between two great monasteries” is absolutely landlocked between the Great Pemayangtse Monastery & the Sangachoeling Monastery belonging to the Nyingma-Pa order of Tibetan Buddhism and both of them built in the beginning period of Namgyal dynasty of Sikkim.

Overnight stay at the Hotel.

11

Pelling- Khechupalri - Yuksum (56 kms)

After breakfast, we check out and drive to Khechupalri Lake, 28 kms and an hour drive, this Lake is one of the Holiest Lake in Sikkim. This unusually calm and placid lake, located in the midst of a dense forest is considered sacred to both Buddhist and the Hindus, who come here to make a wish and is among the pilgrimage site of Sikkim. It is also believed to be the wish-fulfilling lake. After visiting a this beautiful and Holy Lake, we further drive to Yuksum (5800 fts/28 kms/1 hr) enroute we stop by a famous Khanchendzonga waterfalls for a while and again start for Yuksum which is just about 30 minutes drive from here. Yuksum was the first capital of Sikkim where the first king (Chogyal) was consecrated by the three learned monks in the year 1641-42 A.D. thus starting the Namgyal Dynasty in Sikkim. The history of Sikkim starts from Yuksum with Norbu-Ghang coronation throne as its markings. With the stone throne, tall and old Pine tree and the stupa, one can see and feel the rich heritage of the erstwhile kingdom of Sikkim. Though a small village, it has come up with few good hotels and Homestay for accommodation and is packed with back packers and the adventure enthusiast as this place is the base to the worldwide famous Dzongri-Goechala Trek.

Evening is free for leisure.

Overnight stay at the Hotel

12

Departure

It is about 5 hours drive to Siliguri and is about 130 kms from Yuksum. Upon arrival at Siliguri, farewell by our representative/Guide to conclude the tour.