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'In the Footsteps of Lord Rama' attracts inbound travellers

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DAIWIK HOTELS that has properties in Rameshwaram and Shirdi with upcoming projects in Tirupati and Dwarka, offers not just hospitality but a complete pilgrim experience. The Rameshwaram property and its well researched 'In the Footsteps of Lord Rama' tour have become popular with inbound travellers. "We have created Rameshwaram as a new destination in terms of organised travel. We have got terrific response from inbound operators, we see a lot of foreign

guests," said Debashis Ghosal, MD and CEO, Daiwik Hotels.

Daiwik Hotels has engaged the well known historian and writer Subhadra Sen Gupta for developing these experiences. 'In the Footsteps of Lord Rama' is based on Valmiki's Ramayana, according to which Lord Rama visited 15-16 places. "All these spots are in the vicinity of around 150-200 km around the Ramanathapuram district. The area played an important part in the Ramayana prior to the conquest of Lanka. The tour typically takes two days. It is interest-



Debashis Ghosal

ing to see foreigners taking so much interest in these places. We have been selling the tour

hard to schools and education institutions," mentioned Ghosal.

NRI's form a significant percentage of travellers. "We now have a relationship with some international groups who come and take our hotel - from 90 to 90 rooms for six-seven days. The banquets are used for Ramkatha and other religious discourses," stated Ghosal, adding that the other groups are through inbound tour operators - from France and other European countries. They are primarily interested in architecture and the beauty of the place. The hotel in Shirdi was

opened in January this year. Tirupati and Dwarka are both greenfield projects. The company is in advanced talks with some brownfield and finished properties for branding and operations as well in more pilgrim destinations. "In Shirdi property also we will introduce a unique tour. Similarly, Dwarka which is rich in Hindu mythology will have interesting tours after the property comes up there. Pilgrimage travel is totally unexploited till date, we need standardisation. With more players coming in it is better for the pilgrim tourism sector," avers Ghosal.