

INDIA REPORT

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ABOUT TSUSA

Global Partner Programming

The TSUSA GPP provides a foundational base from which state tourism offices have shared in-country representation with international export marketing and sales activities. Managed by Travel South USA, the official regional destination marketing organization for the 12 state tourism offices, these collaborative efforts create leveraged actions, increase reach of travel trade and journalists, and coordinated consumer campaigns which deliver visitors to the South. In 2019, the Travel South USA region welcomed 10.2 million visitors, who spent \$10.3 billion, with 90% of these visitors arriving from 15 markets from around the globe.

India, the world's fifth-largest economy, is projected to grow between 6% and 7% in FY26, reinforcing its status as one of the fastest-growing major economies. In 2025, the USA received 2.06 million visitors from India, ranking India as the #2 overseas source market (excluding Canada and Mexico) and #4 overall for international arrivals. In 2025, Indian visitors spent \$24.8 billion, ranking number 3 amongst international markets. The country is now the world's third-largest aviation market, with significant airport expansions underway.

With Indian travelers typically holding a 10-year U.S. visa and a significant proportion comprising repeat visitors, the Southern states present considerable potential as destinations to explore. Through the GPP program, our focus will be on promoting the diversity and distinct character of the Southern states in the Indian market, thereby generating stronger interest and engagement among Indian travelers. The rich combination of culture, cuisine, music, and outdoor experiences offered by the region is particularly appealing to the Indian audience, making it a compelling proposition for both first-time and repeat visitors.

Indian travelers increasingly seek diverse experiences spanning sports, entertainment, cruises, wellness, and adventure tourism. Travel is now seen as a contributor to personal well-being and a way to collect unique experiences from shopping and cultural activities to culinary explorations. This shift is fueled by a young, affluent, and digitally savvy population, with millennials and Gen Z leading the way. Rising incomes and a "You Only Live Once" mindset are encouraging higher spending on premium services and exclusive travel opportunities. India's digital adoption is robust, with 1066 million internet users (66% penetration) and mobile connectivity at 1.35 billion connections.

I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Trade and media discussions for TSUSA continued with outreach to 15 trade companies and 6 media meetings in August 2026
- TSUSA India provided destination trainings to 2 companies engaging 7 participants.
- **New Product** - Grand Travel Planners created a TSUSA focused brochure highlighting Alabama, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi & Missouri that was shared across their WhatsApp Broadcast channels.
- Recruitment of 8 trade and 2 media delegates for TSUSA International Showcase 2026 completed. Below are the confirmed participants -
 - Thomas Cook/ SOTC - Mr. Shishir Khambete
 - Flamingo Transworld Pvt Ltd - Ms. Vyoma Dandawala
 - Veena World Hospitality - Ms. Sunila Patil
 - Pathfinders Holidays - Mr. Mahendra Vakharia
 - Holiday Tribe - Mr. Anshu Sharma
 - Windmill Holidays - Ms. Manu Kashyap
 - Bespoke Serenity - Mr. Naresh Chandnani
 - Ottila International - Mr. Bhanu Aravindakshan
 - Travel Trade Journal - Ms. Prativa Bhalla
 - India Outbound - Ms. Varsha Singh
- 6 media meetings were completed in August, resulting in 4 earned media coverages. Additionally, 2 coverages were generated from GMM 2026, and 1 from International Showcase 2025.
- Generated an opportunity from Manifest India for feature on the topic “Discover the Southern USA by Train”
- Executed the monthly content calendar and maintained consistent social media hygiene across Facebook and Instagram.
- Shared recommendations to strengthen social performance, with future efforts focused on Stories, profile optimization, content discoverability, and more saveable, India-relevant content.

II. Comms & PR

Meetings with media, coverage opportunities, contacts, press trips, earned media valuation, clippings, and others.

News Releases

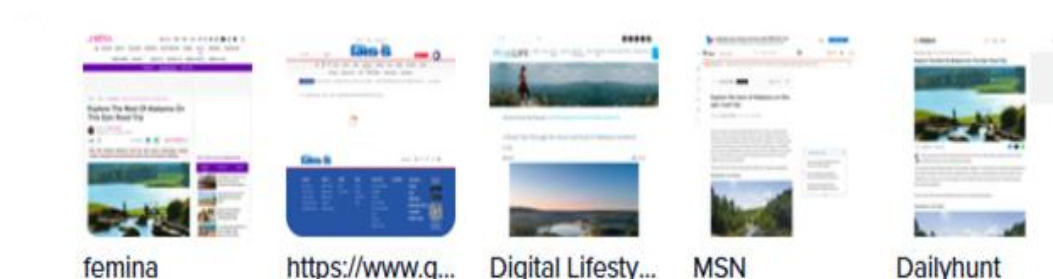
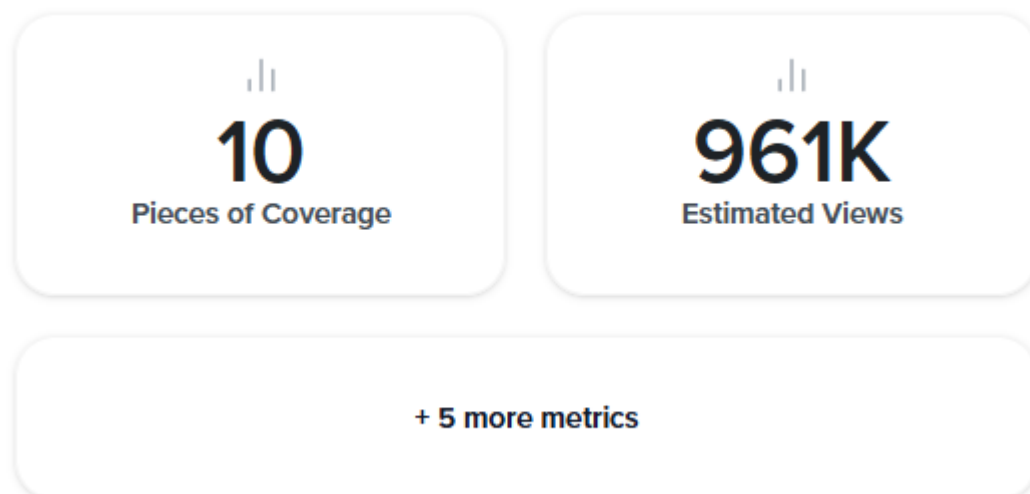
- 8 media clippings were generated in August for TSUSA.
- 4 earned media coverage secured on consumer media platforms on the topic: **Discover the Southern USA by Train**

GMM 2026:

- **Teja Lele, Freelance Writer**
2 media clips appeared in Hindustan Times in August, highlighting Alabama's unique bookshops.

International Showcase 2025:

- **Varsha Singh, Editorial Director, India Outbound**
1 media clip appeared in India Outbound online, highlighting Charleston's History
- CoverageBook Link - <https://app.coveragebook.com/29490/books/baac13aea7790ec7>



II. Comms & PR

Media Contacts(phone calls, emails, personal meetings) cont.

Contacts	Discussion points	Website
Hindustan Times (GMM-2026)	The Alabama bookseller who reads before he recommends	https://www.hindustantimes.com/
Hindustan Times (GMM-2026)	Sweet bookstores in Alabama	https://www.hindustantimes.com/
India Outbound (GMM-2026)	Charleston: Houses where history was written	https://indiaoutbound.info/
News18	From Jazz To Beaches: This Scenic Train Ride Shows You A Different Side Of The US	https://www.news18.com/
Midday	Here are four reasons to take a scenic train ride through southern USA	https://www.mid-day.com/
MSN	Here are four reasons to take a scenic train ride through southern USA	https://www.msn.com/en-in
Her Zindagi	Tips to plan usa trip for indians: explore these states in 4 hour train ride	https://www.herzindagi.com/
HT Syndication	The Alabama bookseller who reads before he recommends	https://htsyndication.com/

III. Trade

Trade Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Activity/Activation	Follow-up/ Next step
Thomas Cook (FIT)	In-person meeting focused on product development for 2027 FIT product listings.	Follow-up email with itineraries & assets was sent
SOTC (FIT)	In-person meeting focused on product development for 2027 FIT product listings.	Follow-up email with itineraries & assets was sent
Grand Travel Planners	Product development discussion on 2027 products. Promotion via their social media / messaging channels discussed.	Follow-up email with important links was sent
On Time Travel	VFR & FIT focused company. We have promoted product development on their new website and shared assets and itineraries accordingly based upon their clientele.	Maintain regular outreach
Bespoke Serenity	A new website with a focus on unique hotels or lodges, scenic journeys, seasonal highlights and lesser-known experiences is currently under development. We have shared assets accordingly. The MD of the company is a participant of the upcoming International Showcase.	Follow-up email with important links was sent
Kesari Tours	Follow up over new product development on Kesari Select for TSUSA as a FIT destination	FIT Product development push
Harmony Tours	Discussion on new product development and focus on states like Kentucky, North & South Carolina and ROTS. They are open to promoting off-beat US destinations.	FIT Product development push
Dream Trip 4U	Discussion over TSUSA being featured within their company product brochure. An update with the final design to follow by Sep Wk1	Maintain regular outreach
Click2Travel	Repeat clients focus for the US and requested itineraries around North & South Carolina, Kentucky and Virginia.	Follow-up email with important links was sent Product development to follow
Seventh Heaven Tours	The company has clients for New Orleans and Alabama. We have promoted the other TSUSA states and shared assets accordingly.	Product development push

III. Trade

Trade Contacts (phone calls, emails, personal meetings)

Contacts	Activity/Activation	Follow-up/ Next step
Sheeraz Tours	The company has a new website under development and we have promoted a TSUSA feature on the same. Assets and itineraries shared accordingly.	Follow-up email with important links was sent.
Fortune Tours	South India based company who have attended our TSUSA webinar. They have VFR clients to Atlanta and Virginia and have requested for itineraries around these states. We have shared the same.	Maintain regular follow-up
Sunday Pure Holidays	The company has a newly created website on which product development for TSUSA was promoted and assets shared accordingly.	Maintain regular follow-up
Voyagers Hub	Discussion on new product development and focus on states like Kentucky, North & South Carolina and ROTS. They are open to promoting off-beat US destinations.	Follow-up email with important links was sent.
Veena World	Product development follow up call. FIT focused product to be uploaded in Sep.	Maintain regular follow-up
Sans Incredible (DMC)	Discussion on featuring TSUSA states as a part of their brochure. To follow up again in early Sep.	Follow-up email with important links was sent.

III. New Product Development



- New product development for TSUSA by Grand Travel Planners, an FIT focus company based out of Chandigarh, India.
- The promotional material created will be promoted across all their messaging channels like WhatsApp Broadcast groups which have over 450 of their regular clients.

IV. Social Media

- The content strategy maintained consistent visibility across Meta, generating 3.6K+ total views and 383 content interactions.
- Instagram remained the primary performance platform, contributing 3.2K+ views and 248 interactions, while maintaining a community of 247 followers.
- Facebook supported additional brand visibility, generating 387 views, 124 3-second video views, and 135 engagements.
- The performance continues to show Instagram as the stronger platform for content consumption and engagement.

V. Market Update

Market & Economy Updates

- India's economy grew 7.8% in Q1 FY 2026–27, exceeding expectations making India as the fastest-growing major economy. Strong domestic consumption, investment and services activity continue to support economic momentum, which is positive for the long-haul outbound travel market.
- India's Travel & Tourism sector generated USD 263.6 billion for the economy in 2025, according to WTTC's latest Economic Impact Research, supporting 46.2 million jobs. The sector grew 7.3% in 2025, highlighting the continued strength of India's travel economy and rising travel propensity.
- India recorded 32.7 million international departures in 2025, up from 30.89 million in 2024, with non-metro markets accounting for 63% of outbound travellers. India is projected to become the world's fifth-largest outbound travel market by 2027, signalling growing opportunities beyond the traditional metro source markets.
- In July, the US had 182,146 arrivals from India bringing the YTD arrivals to 1.15 million with India being the second largest overseas market just after the UK.

Travel Trade Updates

- India's outbound market is becoming increasingly diverse, with Tier-II and Tier-III cities emerging as important sources of international travel. Industry reports highlight the growing contribution of non-metro markets, creating opportunities for destinations to expand trade engagement beyond India's traditional gateway cities.

NTO Updates

- Destination DC concluded its India Sales Mission across Delhi, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad from August 2–7, 2026 engaging with 120 travel trade and media representatives. India remains a key market for Washington DC, ranking first in visitor spending for 2024 and 2025.

V. Market Update

Airline Updates

- Scandinavian Airlines will operate 5x weekly to Mumbai from Copenhagen starting October 1, 2026 connecting 10 US destinations from India. This route is returning after 17 years and connecting to US cities like Seattle, New York, Newark, Boston, Washington DC, Atlanta, Chicago, LA, San Francisco and Miami (seasonal).
- Lufthansa is making India its focus for long haul expansion due to robust numbers and a high consumption of premium travel. India is the second largest premium market after the USA for the airline. They currently operates up to 80 flights per week from India, reflecting the continued strength of Indian international travel and growing demand for premium travel.
- Qatar Airways now has 150 Starlink-equipped widebody aircraft, becoming the first airline to operate a Starlink-equipped Boeing 787-9. The airline has connected more than 23 million passengers to Starlink since its onboard launch in 2024, reflecting the growing focus on enhanced connectivity and passenger experience in long-haul aviation.

Media Updates

- India's Comscore has ranked Network18 the world's No. 1 digital news and information publisher for June 2026, with 376 million unique visitors and a lead over global players including Times Internet, NBCUniversal News Group and Yahoo News Network. [More](#)
- Netflix recently marked 10 years in India, with Co-CEO Ted Sarandos underscoring the country's central role in the platform's global growth, citing its vast entertainment market, diverse storytelling ecosystem, expanding subscriber base, and the growing influence of Indian content worldwide. [More](#)
- India's leading newspaper groups are diversifying beyond print, as non-print businesses such as digital, outdoor advertising, and events are projected to grow 10–12% annually through FY 2027, faster than traditional print revenue growth which is pegged at 2–3% per annum. [More](#)
- India's Connected TV audience has tripled to 207 million viewers across 62–65 million households, with rural CTV viewership doubling in the past year, signaling a major shift toward smaller towns and reshaping TV advertising strategies. [More](#)
- India's free ad-supported television (FAST) market is emerging as the country's largest untapped CTV advertising inventory, with one in five CTV viewers already watching FAST channels for nearly 50 minutes a day, according to a report by WPP Media and The Trade Desk. [More](#)

VI. Actions

1. Travel South USA International Showcase 2026

- Successfully recruited 8 travel trade and 2 Media delegates for the upcoming showcase with follow-ups currently on their air ticket bookings.
- FAM's for all delegates along with City Tours confirmed.

1. Trade

- Brand USA Educational Seminar in Ahmedabad (Sep 10, 2026)
- In-person training with All4Season Ahmedabad planned for Sep 09, 2026

1. PR

- September Theme – Saddling Up in Southern USA: The best places for horse riding and equestrian culture

1. Social Media

- Introduce “Stories” and “Highlights” to improve content discovery, keeping the profile active between posts.
- Build more save-able, planning-led content around itineraries, seasonal travel and destination tips.
- Strengthen Reel hooks and India-relevant messaging to improve reach and video consumption.
- Use destination/trade handles, tagging them wherever relevant.
- Identify strong organic posts for selective boosting, based on engagement and content performance.