

Prada to Launch ₹93,000 “Made in India” Sandals After Cultural Backlash

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Luxury fashion house **Prada** has responded to mounting criticism over cultural appropriation by announcing the launch of a limited-edition sandal collection **made in India**, drawing on the country's traditional Kolhapuri footwear craft.

The Italian brand said the handcrafted sandals — inspired by India's iconic **Kolhapuri chappals** — will be produced in collaboration with Indian artisan bodies and priced at around **€800 (approximately ₹93,000 / \$930)** per pair. The collection is scheduled to go on sale in **February 2026** across approximately **40 Prada stores worldwide** as well as through the brand's online shop.

Prada's senior executive **Lorenzo Bertelli** told Reuters that the move aims to transform earlier backlash into a **positive collaboration** with India's leather craft sector. Under the agreement, two state-backed organizations — **LIDCOM** (Sant Rohidas Leather Industries & Charmakar Development Corporation) and **LIDKAR** (Dr. Babu Jagjivan Ram Leather Industries Development Corporation) — will help produce around **2,000 pairs** of the luxury sandals in regions of **Maharashtra and Karnataka**.

The partnership blends local craftsmanship with Italian manufacturing techniques and includes plans for a **three-year programme** to train and support artisans. Prada said the initiative would fund training in India and short residencies at the brand's academy in Italy, with the goal of preserving traditional skills and boosting artisan incomes.

The launch comes roughly **six months after** Prada faced sharp criticism for showcasing sandals similar to Kolhapuri chappals on its runway **without initially acknowledging their Indian inspiration** — a move that sparked widespread social media outrage and concerns over cultural misappropriation.

While Prada has expanded its presence in India with beauty stores — including its first in **Delhi this year** — Bertelli clarified that there are **no immediate plans** to open clothing retail outlets or manufacturing units in India, although the company may explore market entry strategies over the next few years.

Artisans and industry observers have welcomed the collaboration, saying luxury endorsement could elevate global recognition of the centuries-old craft and encourage younger generations to take up traditional shoemaking techniques