

1. What Happened?

Introduction

Italian luxury brand Prada listed leather sandals on its website for over ₹1 lakh. The sandals closely resemble India's traditional Kolhapuri chappals, yet no credit was given to Indian artisans or the craft's origins.

What Are Kolhapuri Chappals?

- Handmade leather sandals from Kolhapur (Maharashtra) and parts of Karnataka.
- Known for braided straps, intricate cutwork, and durability.
- Entirely handcrafted using vegetable-tanned leather and generational skills.
- Granted a Geographical Indication (GI) tag in 2019 to protect their regional identity.



Challenges Faced by Artisans

- Despite the GI tag, artisans face:
 - Shrinking markets
 - Cheap imitations
 - Low wages
 - Exclusion from global markets
- Around 15,000–20,000 artisans remain active, a sharp decline from earlier decades.

What Is Cultural Appropriation in Fashion?

- When dominant groups use elements of a culture (especially from marginalised communities) without permission, credit, or compensation.
- In fashion, this often means luxury brands profit from traditional designs while ignoring their cultural origins.

Why the Backlash Against Prada?

- Design is unmistakably Kolhapuri, yet no mention of India, Kolhapur, or artisan communities.
- Massive price gap: Prada's version costs ₹1 lakh; Indian artisans sell theirs for under ₹1,000.
- Seen as profiting from cultural heritage without giving back.

Not an Isolated Case

- Similar controversies:
 - Isabel Marant (2015): Copied Mixe embroidery from Mexico.
 - Christian Dior (2019): Used Mexican attire without credit.
 - Louis Vuitton: Used Indian motifs like Banarasi without artisan collaboration.

The Problem with Global IP Laws

- India's GI Act protects Kolhapuri chappals within India only.
- No global law prevents aesthetic imitation unless it's trademarked or copyrighted.
- This legal loophole allows luxury brands to replicate designs without legal consequences.

Calls for Reform

- Push for:
 - Stronger international IP protection for GI-tagged products.
 - Fair trade collaborations between luxury brands and artisan groups.
 - Recognition and compensation for cultural contributions.

Why It Matters

- The controversy highlights:
 - The power imbalance in global fashion.
 - The need to decolonise fashion.
 - The urgency to protect artisan dignity and livelihoods.
- It's not just a cultural issue—it's about economic justice and ethical consumption.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Economics

Source: Indian Express

2. India Climbs SDG Rankings for the First Time

Introduction

India has entered the top 100 in the Sustainable Development Report (SDR) 2025, ranking 99th out of 167 countries. This is a significant jump from 110th in 2016, when the report first began. The SDR is published by the UN's Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) and is widely tracked by governments and policymakers.

Progress in Poverty Reduction (SDG 1)

- India has shown strong progress in reducing poverty.
- Although official poverty data is outdated (last full dataset: 2011–12), proxy estimates suggest poverty has nearly halved from 22% in 2012 to 12% in 2023 (World Bank).
- However, poverty estimation remains controversial due to:
 - Lack of updated consumption data since 2018.
 - Outdated poverty lines (₹33/day rural, ₹47/day urban).

India enters top 100 in UN's global Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) rankings for first time

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India has for the first time secured a place among the top 100 out of 167 countries ranked for their progress in achieving the SDGs, according to a report. According to the UN Sustainable Development Solutions Network's 10th and latest Sustainable Development Report (SDR), India ranks 99th on the 2025 SDG Index with a score of 67.

Hunger and Malnutrition Still a Major Concern (SDG 2)

- Zero Hunger remains a weak spot:
 - 35.5% of children under 5 are stunted (2019–21), only a slight improvement from 38.4% in 2015–16.
 - Wasting reduced from 21.0% to 19.3%.
 - Obesity among adults (15–49 years) has almost doubled between 2006 and 2021, especially in urban areas.

Electricity Access and Renewable Energy Gains (SDG 7)

- Near-universal household electrification has been achieved.
- However, power quality and supply still vary by region and rural–urban divide.
- India is now the 4th largest in renewable energy capacity (mainly solar and wind).

Digital Infrastructure and Financial Inclusion Improving (SDG 9)

- Rapid growth in:
 - Mobile penetration
 - Digital payments via UPI
- But COVID-19 highlighted the rural–urban gap in Internet access, affecting educational outcomes (SDG 4).

Governance and Institutional Weaknesses Persist (SDG 16)

Despite progress in other areas, India continues to underperform in governance-related indicators, such as:

- Rule of law
- Press freedom
- Independent institutions

These gaps have persisted throughout the Modi administration, and remain a critical area for improvement.

Conclusion: A Mixed Performance

India's rise in SDG rankings is commendable, but the country needs to:

- Update poverty metrics
- Address hunger and malnutrition
- Narrow digital and infrastructure gaps
- Strengthen governance and institutions

The focus must shift from ranking gains to substantive and inclusive progress across all sectors.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; International Organisations

Source: The Hindu

3. India Sets Global Example in Child Immunization

Introduction

India's percentage of Zero-dose children (those who've received no vaccines) declined from 0.11% in 2023 to 0.06% in 2024, as per the UN Inter-agency Group for Child Mortality Estimation (UN IGME) report. This positions India as a global leader in child health.



Significant Decline in Child and Maternal Mortality

Under-Five Mortality:

- Under-Five Mortality Rate (U5MR) fell by 78% in India (vs. 61% globally).

Maternal Mortality:

- India's Maternal Mortality Ratio (MMR) is now 80 per lakh live births, an 86% decline since 1990 (compared to 48% globally).

Universal Immunization Programme (UIP) — A Pillar of Public Health

Programme Reach:

- Covers 12 vaccine-preventable diseases
- Vaccinates 2.9 crore pregnant

women and 2.6 crore infants annually

Key Initiatives and Campaigns

1. Zero Dose Implementation Plan (2024):

- Targeted at 143 districts in 11 states
- Focuses on urban slums, migrants, remote areas, and hesitant communities

2. Mission Indradhanush (since 2014):

- 5.46 crore children and 1.32 crore pregnant women vaccinated
- Intensified since 2017

3. Polio-Free Status (since 2014):

- Maintained through National & Sub-National Immunization Days

4. Village Health & Nutrition Days (VHNDs):

- Regular outreach for community-level immunization

5. Multi-Tier Task Forces:

- Coordinated implementation at state, district, and block levels

6. Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) Campaigns:

- Combat vaccine hesitancy via mass media, street plays, community radio, etc.

Technology and Tracking

- U-WIN Platform tracks immunization digitally to ensure no child is missed
- Community outreach includes door-to-door visits, awareness building, and real-time monitoring

Global Recognition and Awards

- India received the Measles and Rubella Champion Award (2024) in Washington D.C.
- Recognized by UN IGME for its consistent immunization efforts

India vs. Other High-Burden Countries

Zero-Dose Children as % of Population (2023):

- India: 0.11%
- Nigeria: 0.98%
- Pakistan: 0.16%
- Indonesia: 0.23%
- Others (Yemen, Sudan, DR Congo, etc.): 0.72–1.68%

Despite having a much larger population, India's zero-dose burden is significantly lower.

Why Comparisons Must Be Contextualized

Any global comparison must consider:

- India's huge population
- Its high absolute vaccination numbers
- Robust systems to reach underserved groups

A Commitment to Last-Mile Delivery

India's success in eliminating Polio (2014) and Maternal & Neonatal Tetanus (2015), along with the 2025 Measles-Rubella campaign, reflects its long-standing commitment to immunization.

With strong healthcare infrastructure and a proactive approach, India continues to protect its children through inclusive and equitable vaccination strategies.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper III; Science & Technology

Source: PIB

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