

The New Year is here, and if you're wondering what the luxury fashion outlook for the year looks like, we've got you covered.

Text ✨ **Bindu Gopal Rao**

I ndian fashion is no longer adapting itself for global consumption; it's leading the conversation even as luxury is moving towards intentional design and away from excess.



# crystal gazing into luxury

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**Trend check**

In 2026, luxury in India feels deeply human, defined by emotion, intention, and a reverence for craft over excess. Quiet confidence defines the moment: thoughtful silhouettes, meaningful handwork, and pieces chosen for connection rather than noise. There is a renewed global focus on handcrafted details—lace, appliqué, mirror work, French knots, intricate hand embroidery and paisley narratives—repositioned as modern essentials rather than decorative accents. Silhouettes lean towards soft femininity and timeless construction, emphasising wearability and longevity.

Designer Preeti Jaain Nainutia, Founder, Nirmooaha says, “We are seeing a strong revival of vintage corsetry and structured silhouettes. Flamboyance still exists, but it is well balanced, with dramatic volumes paired with minimal embroidery. Luxury now lies in how thoughtfully and beautifully it fits into a person’s life not how ornate it appears at first glance.”



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**Tradition meets global luxury aesthetics**

Traditional elements are being reinterpreted through a contemporary lens; the dupatta behaves like a Scandi scarf, saree drapes dissolve into skirts, and salwars evolve into tailored trousers. The silhouettes remain rooted in Indian sensibility, but the styling aligns seamlessly with global luxury aesthetics.

Dolly J, Founder & Creative Director, Dolly J Studio, says, “For us, blending Indian and Indo-Western silhouettes with global luxury is about refinement, not reinvention, where craft remains sacred and forms evolve for modern living. Designs rooted in emotion feel global in spirit, yet unmistakably Indian at heart.”

Indian ethnic patterns, coupled with Indo-Western influences, gradually merge into international luxury in a compassionate remake instead of revamping them. Opulent fabrics and delicate craftsmanship are dexterously employed in a measured approach, adding to the sophistication without overwhelming the design.



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### Digital detail

Digital retail has become central to luxury fashion in India. It has allowed brands to transcend geography and speak directly to a global audience while offering Indian consumers access, transparency, and personalisation. High-quality visuals, detailed storytelling, and virtual styling have begun to enhance the in-store experience.

Today's luxury consumer is more conscious, spending thoughtfully and prioritising quality over quantity. Digital platforms support this shift by enabling deeper engagement rather than impulse consumption.

Ravi Gupta, Creative Designer and Director of Gargee Designer's, says, "The digital market has acted as an indispensable driving force in the development of the luxury fashion market in India, in terms of the way consumer interaction, acquisitions, and finally the ultimate purchase of luxury products take place. Online market platforms of luxury fashion go beyond the city limits, catering to the technology-aware consumer

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groups, who are aware of, as well as appreciate, the advantages of procuring luxury fashion online. The use of innovative technology, such as digital consultations, AI-enabled suggestions, and fully immersive digital experiences, bridges the difference in digital technology usage from this perspective, in addition to influencing ultimate purchase through social platforms that shape aspirational preferences and discoveries."

### Green cues

Sustainability is no longer a choice; it's the foundation of longevity. Consumers today want to invest in pieces that are ethical, timeless, and rooted in real craftsmanship. Luxury has come full circle, back to natural fabrics, hand processes, and garments with a story behind them.

From a business perspective, sustainability is equally essential for





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survival. Babita Malkani, Founder of Babita M, explains, “At this point, sustainability isn’t a nice-to-have; it’s expected. Luxury buyers are asking where something comes from, who made it, and how long it will last. Brands that are honest about slow fashion, ethical sourcing, and supporting artisan communities are earning real loyalty. Today, luxury is as much about values as it is about aesthetics.”

Sustainability also gives luxury brands a competitive edge, building trust and driving innovation without compromising the inherent value of timeless design.

### India-inspired

Traditional Indian textiles and craftsmanship form the foundation of how luxury is being shaped, with heritage, skill, and emotion thoughtfully reinterpreted to give contemporary fashion lasting relevance. In 2026, Brand India has firmly claimed its place at the heart of global fashion narratives, not merely as inspiration, but as cultural currency.

“Western luxury houses drew openly from Indian heritage: Prada’s Spring/Summer 2026

runway spotlighted sandals inspired by traditional Kolhapuri chappals, sparking global conversation around craft and cultural crediting. Louis Vuitton innovated its SS26 staging with an Indian-inspired Snakes and Ladders runway concept, placing Indian games and aesthetics at the heart of its presentation. Dior’s previous Mumbai showcase wove handloom silks, embroidery, and craft narratives into its couture storytelling, celebrating Indian textiles and techniques. This global embrace extends beyond motifs to silhouettes—flowing drapes reminiscent of saris, tunic-like tops, and kaftan ease have found a place in Western wardrobes, proving that Indian craft, texture, and timeless form are defining what luxury means in a connected world,” says designer Shruti Sancheti.





### Celeb cues

Indian celebrities today wear their heritage with pride. Whether it's a handwoven Banarasi on an international red carpet or a contemporary saree at a global event, they are redefining what luxury representation looks like.

Pooja Baheti, Founder of Poppi, says, "Indian celebrities today act as global cultural ambassadors rather than just brand faces. Their red-carpet and international appearances spotlight Indian designers, crafts, and aesthetics on global platforms. This visibility has positioned Indian luxury as confident, modern, and globally aspirational."

Celebrity influence continues to play a significant role in shaping luxury fashion when it comes to driving aspiration, visibility, and cultural representation. Their fashion choices not only reflect emerging trends but actively accelerate them.

### Fashion-forward

India is undeniably having its luxury moment. Luxury today is less about scale and more about intimacy and intention. The expansion of global retail houses and landmark launches, such as Galeries Lafayette, have opened the market further and encouraged

international brands to establish a physical presence.

That said, Indian luxury brands continue to dominate, especially in couture and occasion wear. Weddings remain a cornerstone of luxury consumption in India, and clients continue to seek designers who understand their personal narratives. Indian couture houses thrive because they offer intimacy, customisation, and cultural fluency that global brands often cannot replicate.

India continues to be a strong focus for global luxury houses, with more flagships, boutique concepts, and partnerships emerging. Alongside them, homegrown luxury labels rooted in craftsmanship are thriving, as are private ateliers and curated platforms that offer something rare and personal.

Overall, luxury in 2026 feels quieter but richer. There's a strong lean towards Indo-Western design that travels well, sustainability built into brand DNA, tech-enabled yet human retail experiences, and a growing appetite for limited-edition, personalised pieces. Luxury is no longer about having more. It's about having something that truly feels like you. ✨

