

UP: Can fleather be used in making footwear, asks PM Modi

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LUCKNOW: At the stall of Kanpur-based Phool.co, a unique product caught Prime Minister Narendra Modi's eye.

Examining it closely, the PM spent about 10 minutes at the stall enquiring about it, much to the delight of the company representative.

The product was 'Fleather' or a leather-like material made from recycled flowers. Completely biodegradable, fleather can be used to make various items such as jackets, belts and bags.

Fleather is made with flowers that are offered in the temples of Kanpur and at the Kashi Vishwanath temple in Varanasi. The company has processing units in both cities.

Modi held a sheet of fleather and discussed with CM Yogi the possibility for footwear to be made from it so that it can be used by temple workers.

Ayush Agnihotri, the lead for product development, said it was an exciting day for the company as the suggestion from the PM is something they will work on.

"Even defence minister Rajnath Singh showed keen interest in fleather and asked us to work on a bulletproof prototype for use in the defence industry," said Agnihotri.

The company, founded by Ankit Agarwal, is incubated at IIT-Kanpur and is looking at expanding operations.

"We are in touch with Louis Vuitton and H&M to make products which are sustainable and do not harm animals or the environment in any way. Fleather is also cheaper than leather," said Agnihotri.