

Is That 925 Silver, Natural Gemstone or Real Silk?



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You often can't tell from an Indian listing, and the stamp or certificate offered isn't proof on its own. A 925 stamp is the seller's mark. A full Indian hallmark carries a six-digit HUID you can check on the BIS Care app, but India's mandatory gold hallmarking exempts export pieces, so its absence proves nothing. Gem certificates are only as good as the lab, and silk or linen needs a fibre test.

The Short Version

- A 925 stamp is a claim. An Indian hallmark with a six-digit HUID can be checked on the BIS Care app.
- India's mandatory gold hallmarking order exempts articles meant for export, so a genuine export piece may carry no Indian hallmark.
- Checking a gem report against the lab's database proves the report is real, not that the stone in your hand is the one it describes.
- Fibre swaps (polyester for silk, cotton for linen) are the textile version of the same problem, and a fibre test settles them.
- Most of the bad stories come from online retail sellers and tourist shops, not from export makers working to a written spec.

You usually can't tell from the listing, and the stamp or paper that comes with it isn't proof on its own. A "925" stamp is the seller's own mark, a gem certificate is only as good as the lab that issued it, and "silk" or "linen" means nothing until a fibre test says so. The checks are cheap compared with a returned order, and you only need them on the claims that carry the price.

A long-time online silver reseller put the worry bluntly on a jewellery forum in 2025. "You will find most stuff from India is NOT REAL sterling Silver," he

wrote, and added the test he trusted: "if it's real it should have a full Indian hallmark" ([r/jewelry, September 2025](#)). Half of that is good advice, and half of it, as you'll see, is wrong for export goods. Before going further it's worth saying where these stories come from. Nearly all of them are about online retail sellers and tourist shops. In the same thread another voice pointed out that "Jaipur also exports silver jewellery to big brands globally" ([r/jewelry, March 2025](#)). Makers working to a buyer's written spec and test plan are a different trade. One caveat. Nobody, us included, has measured how often Indian material claims fail. We've planned a sample-and-lab programme to find out. Until then this is a guide to checking, not a failure rate.

SourcingFrom Intelligence

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- 01 **India's mandatory gold hallmarking exempts "any article meant for export and re-import as per trade policy".** So a genuine export piece may carry no Indian hallmark at all, and the hallmark test only works on goods sold inside India.
(Hallmarking of Gold Jewellery and Gold Artefacts (Second Amendment) Order, S.O. 2481(E), 23 June 2021)
- 02 **An Indian hallmark carries a six-digit alphanumeric HUID that anyone can check with the "Verify HUID" feature on the BIS Care app.** ([BIS, revised guidelines for jewellers, July 2026](#))
- 03 **Buyers report fake purity stamps on silver and gold, glass or synthetic stones sold as natural with paper from unknown labs, polyester sold as silk and cotton as linen.** (*Our forum signal log, 2023 to 2026*)

What we don't know yet

- ☐ How often each claim fails, by product and seller type. Our planned sample orders with lab tests are meant to answer it.
- ☐ Whether India has a mandatory hallmarking order for silver. The BIS order page we read on 18 October 2026 lists gold orders only.

1. Does a 925 Stamp Prove Sterling Silver?

No. "925" means 92.5% silver, and anyone with a punch can strike it. Forum buyers say so from experience. "The jewelry marked 14 k gold & 925 sterling silver have all been fake. They are magnetic," one wrote in 2026 ([r/jewelry](#), April 2026).

An Indian hallmark is a stronger mark, because a third party puts it there. India's Bureau of Indian Standards runs hallmarking for gold and silver through recognised assaying and hallmarking centres, and each hallmarked piece gets a six-digit alphanumeric HUID. BIS tells jewellers to display how customers can "verify the authenticity of the jewellery/artefact by using 'Verify HUID feature' on the BIS Care App" ([BIS jeweller guidelines](#), July 2026). Its own surveillance officers check that the HUID's type of jewellery, weight, photographs, jeweller and centre match the piece. You can do the same thing in a few seconds.

Here's the catch the forum advice misses. India's mandatory hallmarking order covers gold jewellery and artefacts in notified districts (the original limit to 14, 18 and 22 carat was dropped from 1 June 2022 by [S.O. 1594\(E\)](#)), and it exempts "any article meant for export and re-import as per trade policy" ([S.O. 2481\(E\)](#), June 2021). For silver, the BIS page we read lists no mandatory order at all. So an honest exporter shipping you sterling pieces may stamp "925" and nothing else, and that's legal. "No Indian hallmark" isn't a red flag on an export order. It just means the hallmark can't do the checking for you.

What can? A magnet is a free first screen, because silver isn't magnetic, though plenty of non-magnetic metals aren't silver either. Next is an XRF reading, which is quick and doesn't damage the piece. It's a screen, and a lab assay is the proof, especially on plated or hollow pieces. Our [fashion jewellery page](#) covers why "silver" and "silver-coloured" sit on different customs lines and need different tests. And check your own market's rules

before you describe anything as sterling, because some countries run their own hallmarking laws.

2. Is a Gem Certificate Proof the Stone Is Natural?

Only if the lab is one you'd trust without the seller. Buyers on a gemstone forum describe stones "misrepresented with false documentation from fake agencies which is widely known" ([r/Gemstones, February 2025](#)). The longer version of that story, Jaipur's small labs and treated rubies included, is on [gems and jewellery](#), so I'll stick to the checks.

There's one trap even careful buyers fall into. A recognised lab's online report check tells you the report is real. GIA's own page says its Report Check confirms "that the information on your report matches what is archived in the GIA report database" ([GIA Report Check](#)). It doesn't tell you that the stone in your parcel is the stone on the report. A genuine report can travel with a different stone. So match the weight, measurements and any inscription on the report to the stone in front of you, and if they don't match, the report is about some other stone.

Three habits do most of the work.

- **Ask for treatment disclosure in writing for every stone**, heated, filled, dyed or none. A stone can be natural and heavily treated at once, and the price should reflect which.
- **Name the lab in your order**, one your own customers recognise, before you see any stones. India has its own export-council lab too. The Gem & Jewellery Export Promotion Council has run the Gem Testing Laboratory in Jaipur for decades, and in 2020 its magazine described it as the largest facility in the country for certifying coloured gemstones, diamonds and their jewellery ([Solitaire, GJEPC, November 2020](#)).

- **Start small and test the first parcel yourself.** Experienced buyers suggest learning the basic instruments, "refractrometer, polariscope, microscope" ([r/Gemstones, February 2025](#)), or paying a lab to check a sample before you scale up.

3. How Do You Check That Silk or Linen Is Real?

With a fibre test, because the swaps are easy to make and hard to see. A buyer in India's own domestic trade wrote in 2026 that "Sellers claim polyester fabric as chanderi silk and what not. Cotton as linen etc" ([r/smallbusinessindia, March 2026](#)). A buyer who said he'd worked with Indian suppliers for decades named "the ongoing issue of fake organic cotton" ([r/SustainableFashion, January 2026](#)).

A textile lab's fibre identification and composition test settles silk, linen, viscose and polyester. A burn test on a loose thread is the old trade screen (silk and wool smell of burnt hair, polyester melts into a hard bead), and it can tell you whether to bother with the lab. It can't give you a composition figure for a label.

India also has a pure-silk label, Silk Mark, which the Central Silk Board's [website](#) links to. It's useful when you see it, but plenty of genuine silk is sold without it, so its absence proves nothing. For organic claims, look the certificate up in the certifier's public database. An Australian buyer who checked a brand's GOTS numbers in 2026 found "About half were not on the gots database" ([r/SustainableFashion, February 2026](#)). How to read each textile certificate is on [textile certifications](#), and the silk-or-viscose question on rugs is on [is a Kashmir rug made in Kashmir?](#)

4. Are "Vintage" Saris Really Vintage?

Mostly not, according to someone in the trade. "It's a new trend to open shops selling "vintage" saris but they're really mass produced to sell as such," an Indian textile-trade voice wrote, and another replied "there just aren't that many "vintage" sarees to go around" ([r/sewing, October 2023](#)). The top comment in that thread had more than 1,600 upvotes.

That isn't a quality problem. New sari fabric printed or woven to look aged is a perfectly good product, and for an upcycled-textile brand it may be the right one. The issue is the word on your own label. If you can't trace a piece's age, describe it as vintage-style and buy it at a new-fabric price. The same goes for "hand block" fabric that may be partly screen printed, which [hand block print from India](#) shows you how to tell apart.

5. Which Claims Are Worth Paying to Test?

The ones that carry the price or the legal risk. A claim that only changes how a piece looks can be judged by eye on the sample. A claim that changes what you can legally call it, or what your customer is paying for, needs proof.

Claim	Free or cheap screen	What proves it	Test it when
Sterling (925) silver	Magnet, weight	Lab assay, after an XRF screen	Every first order, and whenever you say "sterling" on your label
Indian hallmarked gold or silver	Read the HUID	"Verify HUID" on the BIS Care app	Goods bought inside India, never assumed on export pieces
Natural gemstone, untreated	Seller's written disclosure	A recognised lab's report, matched to the stone	Any stone priced as natural or untreated
Silk, linen, wool	Burn test on a thread	Lab fibre composition test	Every first order, and wherever your label states fibre
Organic or recycled fibre	Certificate number	The certifier's public database	Every order you sell as certified
Vintage	Ask for provenance	Usually nothing	Only if you price or label it as vintage

6. What Should You Put in the Order?

Write the claim down as a specification, with the test that will check it and what happens if it fails. For metal, the fineness, the plating if any and the test method. For stones, the identity, the treatment and the lab. For textiles, the fibre composition to a percentage and the lab method. Then add one line that does a lot of work: the goods may be rejected if an independent test doesn't confirm the stated material. A maker who's confident in what it sells will sign that without blinking, and that's useful information in itself. The wider plan for tests by destination is on [quality control in India](#).

If you'd rather have someone in India draw the samples, send them to the lab and hold the shipment until the results are in, [SourcingSync](#) does that work.

Questions Buyers Ask

My silver from India has no hallmark. Is it fake? ^

Not necessarily. India's mandatory hallmarking covers gold sold in India and exempts export pieces, and the order page we read lists no mandatory silver order. Test the metal instead.

Can I check an Indian HUID from abroad? v

Is a gem certificate from a small Jaipur lab worthless? v

Is it unfair to test a supplier's goods? v