

'Ready Next Week': How to Read Delay Messages From Indian Suppliers

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When an Indian supplier keeps saying your goods are nearly ready, the order is usually waiting on something unstated: material, a bigger order on the same line, or work at another workshop. Ask for dated proof of where the order physically is, not for another date.

Key takeaways

- In the buyer threads we audited, slips were described in months, from 3 months to 6 to 9 months.
- The most-described pattern is eager before the order and quiet after the deposit.
- Ask for dated photos, packing lists, mill invoices and the forwarder booking, which cannot exist unless the work does.
- Agree milestones rather than one ship date, and keep part of the payment until a passed inspection.

When an Indian supplier keeps saying your goods are nearly ready, it usually means the order is waiting on something it hasn't told you about: material that hasn't arrived, a bigger customer's order on the same line, or part of the work sitting in another workshop. It rarely means the supplier is lying for sport. You find out which one it is by asking for dated proof of where the order physically is, not for another date.



A US Amazon seller described it in 2019 better than anyone since: "every order will be done "in 2 weeks" but that "2 weeks" can go on for 6 or 9 months" ([r/FulfillmentByAmazon, 2019](#)). A brand owner manufacturing in India answered in the same thread: "Everything will "100% be delivered next week". 6 months later" ([same thread](#)). This post is about decoding those messages and getting to the truth in two or three questions. The caveat - the strongest evidence is old, and a 2026 Tiruppur buyer reporting a three-month delay is one of the few recent voices, so treat the size of the delay as Reported, not a norm.

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01 In the buyer threads we audited, delivery slips were described in months, not weeks, from 3 months (Tiruppur, 2026) to 6 to 9 months (US sellers, 2019). (*Our forum audit*)

02 The most-described pattern is eager before the order, quiet after the deposit. (*Five independent buyer voices in our audit*)

03 The fix buyers report working is payment structure, not more chasing: money that is still owed keeps the order moving. (*Same audit*)

What we don't know yet

□ Quoted against actual lead times by product and cluster. Nobody publishes them.

1. Why Does "Next Week" Keep Moving?

Because "next week" is often an honest guess about something the supplier doesn't control. In the buyer and supplier threads we read, a stalled order usually comes down to one of three things. The yarn, fabric or component hasn't come in. A bigger buyer's order jumped the queue on the same line. Or part of the work was sent to another unit, as is normal in Indian clusters, and that unit is behind. Each of those produces the same message to you.

There's also a cultural habit worth knowing about. An India-based sourcing agent wrote in 2026 that "Vendors here will rarely say "no" directly" ([r/Importing, 2026](#)). "Next week" can be a polite way of not saying "we don't know yet". It's not malice. It's just useless to you for planning.

2. What Do the Common Messages Usually Mean?

Read these as prompts for a question, not as verdicts.

"Final stage, packing soon." Ask for a photo of packed cartons with your shipping marks, next to today's newspaper or a dated screen. If cartons exist, that takes five minutes.

"Waiting for fabric" or "material is coming." Ask for the mill's invoice or dispatch note, with a date. A delay at the mill is real and common, and the paper tells you whether it's days or weeks.

"Small issue in dyeing" or "small issue in printing." That usually means the job is at another unit. Ask which unit, and whether a re-dye or re-print is needed. A re-dye can add real time.

Silence after your deposit. A US brand that tried ten makers described it: "yes yes we should be able to do it I'll get back to you tomorrow" and then silence ([r/FulfillmentByAmazon, 2020](#)). That's the one to escalate fast, with a call, not another email.

Message	What it often means	What to ask for
"Final stage, packing soon"	Could be true, or not started	A photo of packed cartons with your shipping marks, dated
"Waiting for fabric"	A delay at the mill, which is real and common	The mill's invoice or dispatch note, with a date
"Small issue in dyeing or printing"	The job is at another unit	Which unit, and whether a re-dye or re-print is needed
Silence after your deposit	The one to worry about	A call, not another email



3. What Proof Shows Where the Order Really Is?

Ask for things that can't be produced unless the work exists. A dated photo of your goods on the line with your label or tag visible. A packing list with carton counts and weights. The mill invoice for your fabric. And, once it's close, the booking confirmation from the forwarder. A supplier who's genuinely nearly ready will send all of these without fuss.

If the photos never come, or come with someone else's labels, you've learned the order hasn't started. That's painful, but it's far better to learn it in week six than week twenty.

4. How Do You Stop It Happening Next Time?

Agree milestones, not a single ship date.

1. **Set the milestones:** fabric in, cutting started, half the run done, packed.
2. **Ask for a dated photo at each one.**
3. **Tie money to the ones that matter**, keeping part of the payment until a passed inspection.

Buyers who keep part of the payment until a passed inspection report keep the supplier's attention, because the deal isn't finished for them either. How to structure that is on [paying an overseas supplier safely](#).

Also ask the plain question at quote stage: what else is on your line in those weeks? A supplier who tells you about the big order ahead of yours is one you can plan with. And if delays are a pattern rather than a one-off, the wider controls are on [risks of buying from India](#). Part of the slip often happens after the factory too, at booking and at the hub, which I cover in [why Indian lead times are longer](#).

Why part of an order sits in another unit is explained in [job work and subcontracting in India](#), and [communicating with Indian factories](#) covers the indirect "yes".



If you can't chase a workshop in another time zone every morning, [SourcingSync](#) visits the line, confirms each milestone and tells you where the order really is.

Questions Buyers Ask

Should I cancel after a delay? ^

Not on the first one. Ask for proof first. Cancel when proof never comes, because then the order probably hasn't started.

Can I write late-delivery penalties into the contract? v

Is the supplier stalling because I'm small? v

Back to "2 Weeks"

The seller whose "2 weeks" became nine months never knew where his order was. That's the real failure. Ask for dated proof at each milestone, keep part of the money until the goods pass, and "next week" turns back into a date you can check.