

RIYASAT: THE GREAT ANARCHY

A heavy euro on extraction economics in the Indian subcontinent, 1693–1793.

4 players • 6 ages • 2 cycles per age

1. PREMISE

You are a **zamindar**, a revenue intermediary holding collection rights in one of four regions of the subcontinent. You are not a sovereign. You operate beneath a shifting political authority, trading, taxing, and defending your land while empires rise and fall above you.

The game ends in 1793 at the Permanent Settlement, which converted zamindari collection rights into legal proprietorship. **Land tiles held at the end of Age 6 are your victory points.** Silver is what lets you keep holding land.

2. THE MAP

Regions

NORTH

The old imperial heartland, and the first to come apart. Mughal authority at Delhi and Agra thins across the century under Persian and Afghan invasion, while Sikh misls consolidate in the Punjab and Rajput houses hold the desert marches. Your monopoly is **nitre**, the saltpetre every army on the subcontinent needs for powder; no fort anywhere can arm itself without you. Your strength is leverage: everyone must come to you, and the overland caravan routes through Multan still carry your goods toward Kandahar and Central Asia. Your weakness is that those routes are closing, and the empire whose prestige you trade on is dying.

EAST

Bengal, the richest province in the subcontinent and the one every European company wants. The Nawabs rule from Murshidabad; the English sit at Calcutta and the Dutch at Chinsurah, and the balance between them will not hold. Your monopoly is **muslin**, the finest textile in the world trade and the benchmark against which every other cloth is priced. Your strength is wealth and proximity: the deepest domestic market, the busiest ports, the shortest route from loom to ship. Your weakness is that you are the prize, and everyone knows it.

WEST

Maratha country, from the Konkan coast across the Deccan and up into Malwa and Gujarat. The Peshwas at Poona command the most effective military power in India; Surat is an old imperial port in decline, Bombay a new English one on the rise. Your monopoly is **opium**, grown in Malwa and demanded from Multan to the Bay of Bengal. Your strength is position: you sit between North and South, and much of what crosses the subcontinent crosses your gates. Your weakness is that everyone else knows this too.

SOUTH

The most contested ground on the board. The Nizam holds Hyderabad, Mysore rises under Hyder Ali and Tipu at Seringapatam, and the English at Madras and the French at Pondicherry fight their European wars using Indian troops and Indian money. Your monopoly is **spices**, the trade that brought Europe here in the first place. Your strength is choice: two rival European buyers competing for the same goods. Your weakness is that their war is fought on your land.

Nodes

Domestic Trading Hub. Your region's centre of trading. This is where domestic goods get supplied to the rest of the region and merchants congregate.

Global Trading Hub. Important ports built up by foreign trading companies, sanctioned by their monarchs to handle trade with the East and bring expensive import goods into their region. The British, French, Dutch and Portuguese ports all vie for the biggest share of the subcontinent's resources.

Mint. The money centre of the region. This is where silver bullion or Spanish reales are converted to regional coin. At this point in Indian history each region had its own mint, and legal tender had to pass through it; this gave rise to the judiciary power of the shroffs, the bankers.

Fort. The centre of political and military strength of the region. These are historic cities, many of which are still centres of economic and industrial progress in their region to this day.

Roads and gates

Nodes connect by roads. **Chauki gates are printed on border crossings.** These are your toll collection gates. Control them to impose taxes on any trade going through them.

3. COMMODITIES

Regional distribution

Region	Monopoly	Military	Shared	Shared
North	Nitre	Grains	Sugar	Indigo
East	Muslin	Salt	Chintz	Sugar
South	Spices	Grains	Chintz	Cotton
West	Opium	Salt	Indigo	Cotton

Rules

- **Grains and salt** always sell at base price, never fluctuate, and are never demanded by nodes. They exist only as military inputs.
- Military actions require your own region's military good. North and South use grains; East and West use salt.

- **Nodes never demand a good produced in their own region.** Local demand is assumed satisfied.
 - **Monopoly prices are a negotiation floor, not a ceiling.** A monopoly holder sets their own price in live negotiation.
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4. PLAYER MAT

Land tiles

Each tile shows:

- **Commodity icon**
- **Farmers required** (bottom left)
- **Upkeep cost** (bottom right)
- **Base price** (top right)

One tile produces one unit. Upkeep is charged on land held, not on what grows on it.

Upkeep track

Your upkeep track represents the silver required to keep your holdings functional. It runs 15 spaces plus a default space. Passing space 15 into **X** means you cannot pay; forfeit a land tile.

5. LABOUR

- Meeples come from a **shared central pool**.
 - 20 meeples replenish the pool each age. Unhired meeples persist as soldiers and do not return to the box.
 - **Any farmer not hired becomes a soldier** and enters the soldier pool.
 - Soldiers on retainer tiles return to the shared pool at the start of the next age, where rivals may hire them.
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6. INVESTMENT TRACKS

Four tracks, six spaces each. Track position is a **player attribute**, not a node attribute. It applies to every node of that type across the map and survives node transfer.

Advancing

- Contribute a demanded good to a node of that type.
- **One contribution per node type per age.** You may advance more than one different track in the same age, never the same track twice.
- Advancing moves you one space regardless of the good's value.

Modifiers

- **Mint** adds to Mohur and Reale conversion rather than to sale price.
- **DTH** front-loads, then flattens.

- **GTH** is weakest early and bursts at the end. GTH nodes also close progressively (Goa, Chinsurah, Pondicherry), so the track gets harder to feed as it gets more valuable.
- **Fort** ascends evenly.

Rewards

Track spaces pay out as you reach them. Rewards come in two kinds.

Currency. Gold Mohurs, Silver Reales and faction tokens. Mohurs and Reales are stored value; convert them to spendable silver by taking a loan, at a rate improved by your Mint position. Faction tokens are political standing, spent on dastaks, land buybacks, and trade.

Upgrades. Permanent improvements to how you play, and the rarest thing on the board.

- **Production upgrades** come from the Domestic Trading Hub track and improve what your land yields or what it costs to hold.
- **Military action upgrades** come from the Fort track and improve your capacity to build, contest, and defend.
- **Special action upgrades** come from the Global Trading Hub track and improve your financial and political actions. These are the most powerful upgrades in the game and the hardest to reach.

Upgrades are first come, first served. Once a player takes the upgrade on a space, it is gone for the rest of the game. Any player reaching that space afterwards receives the track's currency instead.

Faction tokens are earned by delivering to a node; the token's faction is determined by the **node's region**. European faction tokens come from GTH nodes.

7. CURRENCY

Item	Value
Gold Mohur	20 silver
Silver Reale	30 silver

Mint track position adds its bonus to each conversion. At Mint 6, a Mohur converts at 38 and a Reale at 48.

8. PLAYER ACTIONS

Production

- **Produce** at normal, over, or under intensity.
- **Overproduce:** +1 resource, +1 upkeep, take a crisis point.
- **Underproduce:** -1 upkeep, take a crisis point.

Military

- **Create a chauki:** 1 garrison + 2 military goods.
- **Contest a holding:** 3 military goods + minimum 1 garrison. Comparative; if the defender has greater total garrison strength, the attack fails.
- **Clear a crisis:** 1 garrison + 2 military goods.
- **Rent armies to the board:** soldiers lower your upkeep but cannot defend. They return to the shared pool at the start of the next age.

Financial and political

- **Take a loan:** convert a Mohur or Reale into spendable silver.
- **Buy a dastak:** 10 silver plus one faction token of the player holding the gate.
- **Buy back land:** 1 faction token of the central power (earned from investment track rewards) + 1 Mohur or Reale.

Trade

After players produce, place the resources you wish to sell in your designated slots on the central board, and place faction tokens in the regions you wish to buy from.

Trading is verbal and unencoded. Negotiate prices, undercut, or refuse to sell at your own discretion.

Once a sale is finalised, take the faction token of the player whose resources you accepted and give them a faction token of your own.

9. CHAUKIS AND TRIBUTE

Chaukis sit on printed border gates only. A chauki fires when a rival moves goods across that gate.

The target chooses one of three responses:

Response	Cost
Pay tribute	Silver, scaled to the demander's committed soldiers
Defend	Compare total garrison strength; if the defender has more, the demand fails
Concede	Lose production capacity for the age (blocked tiles)

A **dastak** exempts goods at the gate. It requires a faction token of the gate-holder's faction and must be acquired in the production phase, before trading begins.

10. CONTESTING A HOLDING

Cost: 3 military goods + minimum 1 garrison. Any holding may be targeted, not only chaukis.

The attacker chooses one effect:

- **Knock down.** The loser moves down one space on an investment track of the attacker's choosing. A player cannot be pushed below their starting position.
- **Seize an upgrade.** The upgrade transfers to the attacker. You may only contest for an upgrade you could otherwise have earned.
- **Remove a chauki.** The targeted player's chauki is destroyed on a successful contested strength check.

11. LOANS

Ages	Base loan
1-2	15
3-4	20
5-6	25

Interest: a loan not repaid by the end of the age leads to a deduction in the final VP calculation.

12. GAME FLOW

Each age runs two cycles, then closes.

1. **Narrative reveal.** The calendar sets node demand and reveals the sovereign's due for the age.
2. **Hire, produce, take actions.** Output is set, the upkeep track loads, and special actions (including loans) are taken turn by turn.
3. **Trade and negotiate.** Chauki demands resolve live as goods move. Silver changes hands between players.
4. **Contribute to nodes.** Place your contribution beneath the node marker; advance one space on the corresponding track and take the reward.
5. **Second cycle.** Repeat steps 2-4.
6. **Pay up.** Settle upkeep, repay loans, pay the sovereign's due. This silver goes to the bank.
7. **Settlement.** Determine revenue positions for the next age.

Silver spent on upkeep and the sovereign's due leaves the economy. Silver spent on goods, tribute and dastaks moves between players.

13. REVENUE AND THE SOVEREIGN'S DUE

Revenue is your recurring silver inflow at the start of every age. It comes in two bands, upper and lower. The settlement phase decides which band you sit in.

The sovereign's due is your ruling sovereign's tribute, demanded at the end of every age. Failure to pay leads to land loss.

14. SETTLEMENT

Resolved at the end of each age, after all payments. Two players take the upper revenue band; two take the lower.

Contribution limit

Each player may contribute to a given node type once per age. Each contribution advances one space on the matching track.

The two conditions

Condition 1 — Supply. The player who contributed the most resources overall, counted across every node on the board regardless of ownership.

Condition 2 — Reach. The player who contributed to the greatest number of distinct node types. Quantity is irrelevant; only breadth counts.

Resolution

1. Resolve Condition 1. That player takes the first upper position.
2. Resolve Condition 2. If it names the same player, they keep only their first position and the second upper position passes to the runner-up on Condition 2.
3. The two remaining players take the lower band.

Ties

- **Condition 1 tie:** the tied player higher on the investment tracks wins. If they lead on different tracks, the player with the lower current revenue position wins. If still tied, earlier in turn order.
 - **Condition 2 tie:** the tied player with the larger total supply contribution wins. A player who has already won Condition 1 is excluded. If still tied, the player with the lower current revenue position wins.
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15. SCORING

Land tiles held at the end of Age 6 are victory points.

- Land lost to arrears, raids, crises or loan default is lost score.
 - **European faction tokens** may be spent at the end of the game to buy back land, giving a late catch-up route through collaboration with the Company.
 - Unpaid loan principal and accrued interest are deducted from final silver.
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APPENDIX: HISTORICAL REFERENCES

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