

## CASE STUDY

Virji Vora (c. 1590–c. 1670s) was an Indian merchant from Surat during the Mughal era. The East India Company Factory Records describe him as the richest merchant in the world at the time.

The business house of Virji Vora had branches at several places in India, as well as the port cities of the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, and South-East Asia. Virji had agents at most important commercial centres of India, including Agra, Burhanpur, Malabar, Goa, Bihar etc. Virji Vora's relationships with the Mughal Subahdars (Governors) of Surat were mostly cordial. By 1623, Virji had become influential to the Mughal Subahdar of Surat. He was an important figure in the civic affairs of Surat. Virji Vora competed with the British East India Company. The Dutch and the English often used his facilities for transmitting large amounts of money from Surat to Agra through hundis.

Virji Vora suffered a major setback when the Maratha chief Shivaji raided Surat in 1664. Maratha soldiers demolished his residence and warehouses, and looted a large amount of money, along with pearls, rubies, emeralds, and diamonds.[5] Volquard Iverson, a Dutch eye-witness, states that Shivaji got, "six barrels of gold, money, pearls, gems and other precious wares" from Virji. The French traveller Jean de Thévenot, who visited Surat in the 1660s and developed a friendship with Virji, also wrote about the huge monetary loss suffered by him during the Shivaji's raid.

1. Virji Vora has been variously described as a "merchant prince" - Why?
2. Hundi refers to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. 'Virji had become influential to the Mughal Subahdar of Surat' ---Justify with reason.
4. When East India companies came to India to trade, they didn't face any hardship to establish their trade connection.--do you think so? Explain in your words.
5. How did the rise of Marathas change the fate of the 'richest merchant' of India.
6. State the name of a traveller who came to the gateway to the west during the reign of Aurangzeb.
7. The Persian Gulf is situated between \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.
8. Kerala and Karnataka coast together known as \_\_\_\_\_.