

Class 12 · Hindustani Music (Vocal) · Unit 4

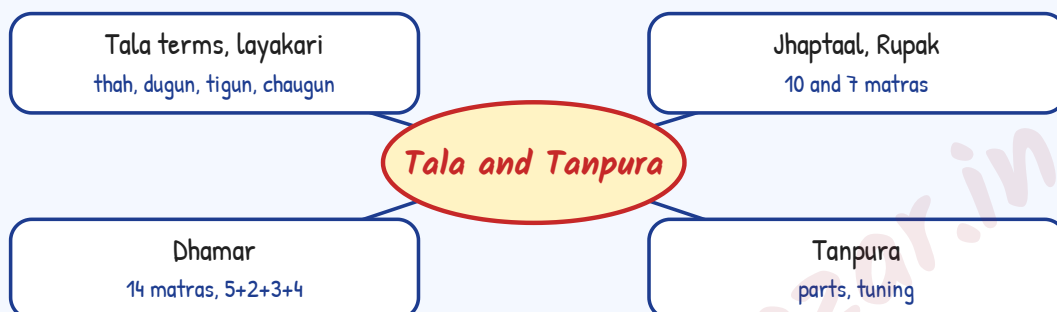
Chapter 5

Talas and the Tanpura



CBSE Hindustani Music Vocal (034) theory 2026-27 · Unit 4 = 6 marks of 30 · Jhaptaal, Rupak, Dhamar; tuning of Tanpura

Chapter map



What is inside

1. Tala terms and the Bhatkhande signs
2. Jhaptaal, Rupak, Dhamar in Thah, Dugun, Tigun and Chaugun (12 tables)
3. Tanpura: labelled parts and tuning steps
4. Every CBSE board question of 2024, 2025, 2026 on this unit, solved; MCQs, A-R

This unit in the board paper

year	1 mark	2 marks
2024	Jodi taar statement	Dhamar thah + dugun / tuning; Tanpura picture
2025	types of Tanpura; bridge statement	Dhamar / Jhaptaal thah + tigun; tuning
2026	Rupak vibhags	Dhamar + dugun; tuning; Jhaptaal tigun

Based on the CBSE Hindustani Music Vocal syllabus 2026-27. All answers written by us.

5.1 Tala terms ★★

tala	a fixed cycle of beats (matras) that measures time in music
matra	the unit beat
vibhag	a section of the tala
sam	the first matra, the most stressed: sign X
tali	a clap at the start of a vibhag: signs 2, 3, 4
khali	a wave of the hand (empty beat): sign 0
theka	the fixed bols (syllables) of a tala on tabla or pakhawaj
avartan	one full cycle of the tala
laya	tempo: vilambit (slow), madhya (medium), drut (fast)
layakari	playing bols in proportion to the matra: thah (1 bol per matra), dugun (2), tigun (3), chaugun (4)

Writing tala notation (Bhatkhande system): write matra numbers, bols under them, divide vibhags with vertical lines, put X, 2, 3, 0 below the first matra of each vibhag, and join the bols of one matra with an arc (shown here as an underline curve). In dugun, tigun and chaugun the theka is repeated so that the whole cycle is filled: dugun covers the cycle with 2 avartans of bols, tigun with 3, chaugun with 4.

5.2 Jhaptaal ★★★

10 matras; 4 vibhags of **2+3+2+3**; talis on 1 (X), 3 (2), 8 (3); khali on 6 (0). Used for vilambit and madhya laya khayal and bhajans; played on tabla.

Theka: Dhi Na | Dhi Dhi Na | Ti Na | Dhi Dhi Na

Jhaptaal: Thah (single) · 10 matras · vibhags 2+3+2+3

X	1 Dhi	2 Na	
2	3 Dhi	4 Dhi	5 Na
0	6 Ti	7 Na	
3	8 Dhi	9 Dhi	10 Na

Jhaptaal: Dugun (double) · 10 matras · vibhags 2+3+2+3

X	1 <u>DhiNa</u>	2 <u>DhiDhi</u>	
2	3 <u>NaTi</u>	4 <u>NaDhi</u>	5 <u>DhiNa</u>
0	6 <u>DhiNa</u>	7 <u>DhiDhi</u>	
3	8 <u>NaTi</u>	9 <u>NaDhi</u>	10 <u>DhiNa</u>

Jhaptaal: Tigun (triple) · 10 matras · vibhags 2+3+2+3

X	1 <u>DhiNaDhi</u>	2 <u>DhiNaTi</u>	
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2	3 <u>NaDhiDhi</u>	4 <u>NaDhiNa</u>	5 <u>DhiDhiNa</u>
0	6 <u>TiNaDhi</u>	7 <u>DhiNaDhi</u>	
3	8 <u>NaDhiDhi</u>	9 <u>NaTiNa</u>	10 <u>DhiDhiNa</u>

Jhaptal: Chaugun (fourfold) · 10 matras · vibhags 2+3+2+3

X	1 <u>DhiNaDhiDhi</u>	2 <u>NaTiNaDhi</u>	
2	3 <u>DhiNaDhiNa</u>	4 <u>DhiDhiNaTi</u>	5 <u>NaDhiDhiNa</u>
0	6 <u>DhiNaDhiDhi</u>	7 <u>NaTiNaDhi</u>	
3	8 <u>DhiNaDhiNa</u>	9 <u>DhiDhiNaTi</u>	10 <u>NaDhiDhiNa</u>

5.3 Rupak ★★★

7 matras; 3 vibhags of 3+2+2. Its **sam falls on khali**: matra 1 is shown X/0 (sam and khali together); talis on 4 and 6. Used for madhya laya khayal, bhajan, geet; played on tabla.

Theka: Ti Ti Na | Dhi Na | Dhi Na

Rupak: Thah (single) · 7 matras · vibhags 3+2+2

X/0	1 Ti	2 Ti	3 Na
2	4 Dhi	5 Na	
3	6 Dhi	7 Na	

Rupak: Dugun (double) · 7 matras · vibhags 3+2+2

X/0	1 <u>TiTi</u>	2 <u>NaDhi</u>	3 <u>NaDhi</u>
2	4 <u>NaTi</u>	5 <u>TiNa</u>	
3	6 <u>DhiNa</u>	7 <u>DhiNa</u>	

Rupak: Tigun (triple) · 7 matras · vibhags 3+2+2

X/0	1 <u>TiTiNa</u>	2 <u>DhiNaDhi</u>	3 <u>NaTiTi</u>
2	4 <u>NaDhiNa</u>	5 <u>DhiNaTi</u>	
3	6 <u>TiNaDhi</u>	7 <u>NaDhiNa</u>	

Rupak: Chaugun (fourfold) · 7 matras · vibhags 3+2+2

X/0	1 <u>TiTiNaDhi</u>	2 <u>NaDhiNaTi</u>	3 <u>TiNaDhiNa</u>
2	4 <u>DhiNaTiTi</u>	5 <u>NaDhiNaDhi</u>	

3	6 NaTiTiNa	7 DhiNaDhiNa
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5.4 Dhamar ★★★

14 matras; 4 vibhags of **5+2+3+4**; talis on 1 (X), 6 (2), 11 (3); khali on 8 (0). Played on the **pakhawaj** with **Dhamar gayaki** (Hori songs on Krishna's Holi), a dhrupad-style form sung with dugun, tigon and chaugun layakari. **S** marks an avagrah (a silent, held matra).

Theka: Ka Dhi Ta Dhi Ta | Dha S | Ga Ti Ta | Ti Ta Ta S

Dhamar: Thah (single) · 14 matras · vibhags 5+2+3+4

X	1 Ka	2 Dhi	3 Ta	4 Dhi	5 Ta
2	6 Dha	7 S			
0	8 Ga	9 Ti	10 Ta		
3	11 Ti	12 Ta	13 Ta	14 S	

Dhamar: Dugun (double) · 14 matras · vibhags 5+2+3+4

X	1 KaDhi	2 TaDhi	3 TaDha	4 SGa	5 TiTa
2	6 TiTa	7 TaS			
0	8 KaDhi	9 TaDhi	10 TaDha		
3	11 SGa	12 TiTa	13 TiTa	14 TaS	

Dhamar: Tigon (triple) · 14 matras · vibhags 5+2+3+4

X	1 KaDhiTa	2 DhiTaDha	3 SGaTi	4 TaTiTa	5 TaSKa
2	6 DhiTaDhi	7 TaDhaS			
0	8 GaTiTa	9 TiTaTa	10 SKaDhi		
3	11 TaDhiTa	12 DhaSGa	13 TiTaTi	14 TaTaS	

Dhamar: Chaugun (fourfold) · 14 matras · vibhags 5+2+3+4

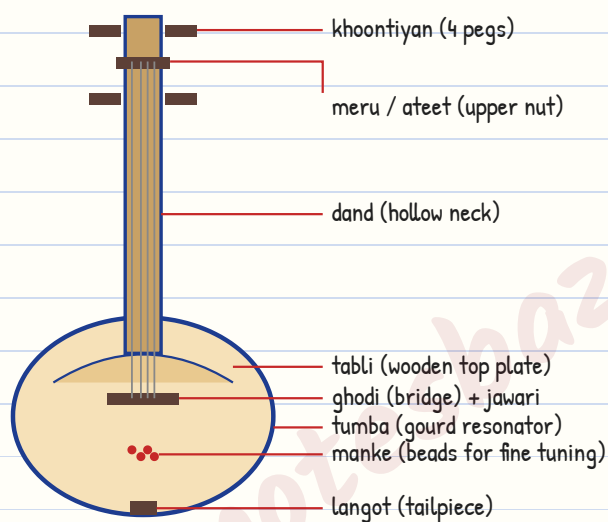
X	1 KaDhiTaDhi	2 TaDhaSGa	3 TiTaTiTa	4 TaSKaDhi	5 TaDhiTaDha
2	6 SGaTiTa	7 TiTaTaS			
0	8 KaDhiTaDhi	9 TaDhaSGa	10 TiTaTiTa		
3	11 TaSKaDhi	12 TaDhiTaDha	13 SGaTiTa	14 TiTaTaS	

Quick compare

tala	matras	vibhags	tali	khali
Jhaptaal	10	2+3+2+3	1, 3, 8	6
Rupak	7	3+2+2	4, 6	1 (sam)
Dhamar	14	5+2+3+4	1, 6, 11	8

5.5 The Tanpura ★★★

A four-stringed drone instrument that gives the **Adhar Shadj** (base Sa) and its harmonics for the singer. **Types: male Tanpura** (bigger, deeper, for male voices) and **female Tanpura** (smaller, higher pitch, for female voices); also small "Tanpuri".



Strings: 1st: mandra **Pa** (or Ma / Ni for ragas without Pa); 2nd and 3rd: **jodi taar** (pair), tuned to **madhya Sa** (steel); 4th: **kharaj**, mandra Sa (brass/copper, thicker).

Tuning the Tanpura ★★★

1. fix the singer's **Sa** (pitch), e.g. from a harmonium or electronic tanpura
2. tune the two **jodi strings** exactly to **madhya Sa** with the pegs, then match them with the beads
3. tune the **first string** to **mandra Pa** (Ma in ragas like Malkauns, Ni in some others)
4. tune the **kharaj** (4th) string to **mandra Sa**, one octave below the jodi
5. fine-tune with the **manke**; adjust the **jawari** threads on the bridge for a rich buzzing "naad"
6. pluck in order **Pa - Sa - Sa - Sa** (middle finger for the first, index finger for the others) evenly, without stopping

CBSE board questions 2024-2026, fully solved

CBSE 2025 · 034 How many types of Tanpuras are there? (A) male (B) female (C) male and female (D) only taar saptak swaras Tanpura [1]

Ans. (C) Male and female Tanpura

CBSE 2024 · 034 S I: In the Tanpura, jodi taar are tuned in Shadj. S II: The time cycle of ragas was established by V.D. Paluskar in modern times. [1]

Ans. (B) S I correct, S II incorrect: the modern time theory was set out by **V.N. Bhatkhande**. (No official scheme for 2024; answer by us.)

CBSE 2025 · 034 S I: Jati of Raga Bhairav is Sampurna-Sampurna. S II: The lower part of the Tanpura is called the bridge. [1]

Ans. (C) S I correct, S II incorrect: the lower round part is the **tumba**; the bridge (ghodi) sits on the **tabli**.

CBSE 2026 · 034 S I: "Ma Pa, Ga Ma Ga - Re - Re Sa" is related to Raga Bhairav. S II: The vibhag arrangement of Rupak is 3-2-2. [1]

Ans. (D) S I incorrect, S II correct.

CBSE 2024 · 034 (A) Write Dhamar Tala with Thah and Dugun in tala notation. OR (B) Describe the tuning of a Tanpura. [2]

Ans. (A) Dhamar: 14 matras, vibhags 5+2+3+4, X on 1, 2 on 6, 0 on 8, 3 on 11. Thah and Dugun as in the tables on pages 3-4. [1 + 1]

(B) Tuning steps 1-6 in 5.5: jodi to madhya Sa, first string to mandra Pa (or Ma/Ni), kharaj to mandra Sa, fine tuning with beads and jawari, pluck Pa Sa Sa Sa. [2] (No official scheme for 2024; answer by us.)

CBSE 2024 · 034 (B) Draw a Tanpura marking its parts. [2]

Ans. Draw as in 5.5 with labels: tumba, tabli, ghodi (bridge) with jawari, langot, manke, tar (4 strings), dand, meru/ateet, khoontiyen. (No official scheme for 2024; answer by us.)

CBSE 2025 · 034 (A) Write Dhamar Tala or Jhaptaal with its Thah and Tigun in tala notation. OR (B) Specialities of Raga Bageshri (see Ch 6). [2]

Ans. Introduction: **Jhaptaal**: 10 matras, 2+3+2+3, X 1, 2 on 3, 0 on 6, 3 on 8; or **Dhamar**: 14 matras, 5+2+3+4. Thah and **Tigun** written in matras with vibhags, tali-khali signs and arcs, as in the tables. [1 + 1]

CBSE 2025 · 034 (B) Describe the process of tuning the Tanpura. [2]

Ans. Introduction of the Tanpura (4 strings, drone of Sa) [$\frac{1}{2}$]; process: jodi taar to madhya Sa, first taar to mandra Pa (Ma/Ni as the raga needs), kharaj to mandra Sa, fine tuning with manke and jawari, play Pa Sa Sa Sa evenly. [$1\frac{1}{2}$]

CBSE 2026 · 034 (A) Describe Dhamar Tala and write its Dugun in tala notation. [2]

Ans. Dhamar: 14 matras; 4 vibhags 5+2+3+4; talis on 1, 6, 11; khali on 8; played on pakhawaj; accompanies Dhamar (Hori) gayaki; theka Ka Dhi Ta Dhi Ta | Dha S | Ga Ti Ta | Ti Ta Ta S. [1] Dugun: table on page 3 (two bols per matra, theka twice in one cycle). [1]

CBSE 2026 · 034 (B) Describe the tuning of a Tanpura. [2]

Ans. As in 2025: introduction [$\frac{1}{2}$] and the tuning process [$1\frac{1}{2}$].

CBSE 2026 · 034 (B) Describe Jhaptaal and write its Tigun in tala notation. [2]

Ans. Jhaptaal: 10 matras, 2+3+2+3; X on 1, 2 on 3, 0 on 6, 3 on 8; theka Dhi Na | Dhi Dhi Na | Ti Na | Dhi Dhi Na; used for khayal and bhajan. [1] Tigun: table on page 2 (three bols per matra). [1]

20 MCQs

1. Matras in Jhaptaal:

(A) 14 (B) 7 (C) 10 (D) 12

2. Vibhags of Jhaptaal:

(A) 2+3+2+3 (B) 3+2+2 (C) 5+2+3+4 (D) 4+4+4+4

3. Khali in Jhaptal falls on matra:

(A) 1 (B) 3 (C) 8 (D) 6

4. Matras in Rupak:

(A) 10 (B) 7 (C) 14 (D) 16

5. Rupak's sam coincides with:

(A) the 2nd tali (B) khali (C) the 3rd tali (D) matra 4

6. Matras in Dhamar:

(A) 16 (B) 12 (C) 10 (D) 14

7. Vibhags of Dhamar:

(A) 5+2+3+4 (B) 4+4+4+2 (C) 2+3+2+3 (D) 3+4+3+4

8. Khali in Dhamar falls on matra:

(A) 11 (B) 6 (C) 8 (D) 1

9. Dhamar is played on the:

(A) flute (B) sitar (C) sarangi (D) pakhawaj

10. Sign of sam:

(A) 0 (B) X (C) 2 (D) 3

11. Sign of khali:

(A) 2 (B) X (C) 0 (D) 4

1 (C) · 2 (A) · 3 (D) · 4 (B) · 5 (B) · 6 (D) · 7 (A) · 8 (C) · 9 (D) · 10 (B) · 11 (C) · 12 (A) · 13 (B) · 14 (C) · 15 (D) · 16 (A) · 17 (A) · 18 (D) · 19 (B) · 20 (C)

12. Two bols in each matra is:

(A) dugun (B) thah (C) tigan (D) chaugun

13. Bols in one matra of chaugun:

(A) 2 (B) 4 (C) 3 (D) 1

14. Jodi strings of the Tanpura are tuned to:

(A) taar Sa (B) mandra Pa (C) madhya Sa (D) Ma

15. The first string is usually tuned to:

(A) Ga (B) madhya Sa (C) taar Re (D) mandra Pa

16. The kharaj string gives:

(A) mandra Sa (B) madhya Pa (C) taar Sa (D) Ni

17. The gourd of the Tanpura is the:

(A) tumba (B) dand (C) meru (D) langot

18. Beads for fine tuning:

(A) tabli (B) khoontiyani (C) jawari (D) manke

19. Threads on the bridge for buzz:

(A) langot (B) jawari (C) manke (D) meru

20. Tanpura plucking order:

(A) Sa Sa Pa Pa (B) Sa Pa Sa Pa (C) Pa Sa Sa Sa (D) Ma Ga Re Sa

Assertion-Reason (6)

(A) Both true, R explains A. (B) Both true, R does not explain A. (C) A true, R false. (D) A false, R true.

1. A: In Dhamar, a dugun fills one cycle with the theka twice. R: Dugun places two bols in every matra.

2. A: Rupak's first matra is marked X/0. R: Rupak's sam falls on khali.

3. A: Dhamar is played on tabla in khayal. R: Dhamar has 14 matras.

4. A: Jhaptal has three vibhags. R: Jhaptal's vibhags are 2+3+2+3.

5. A: The first Tanpura string is tuned to Ma in Malkauns. R: Pa is varjit in Raga Malkauns.

6. A: Jodi taar are tuned to madhya Sa. R: Male Tanpuras are larger.

Key: 1 (A) · 2 (A) · 3 (D) · 4 (D) · 5 (A) · 6 (B)

Practice

1. Write Rupak in Thah and Chaugun. (2)

2. Write the differences between Jhaptal and Rupak. (2)

Answers: 1. tables on page 3 2. 10 v 7 matras; 4 v 3 vibhags; sam with tali v sam on khali; khali on 6 v on 1

Summary

- Terms: matra, vibhag, sam X, tali 2/3, khali 0, theka, avartan, laya, layakari (thah, dugun, tigon, chaugun).
- Jhaptaal 10 (2+3+2+3; khali 6); Rupak 7 (3+2+2; sam on khali); Dhamar 14 (5+2+3+4; khali 8; pakhawaj).
- Tanpura: male/female; tumba, tabli, ghodi + jawari, langot, manke, dand, meru, khoontiyar; strings Pa Sa Sa Sa(kharaj).
- Tuning: jodi to madhya Sa, first to mandra Pa (Ma/Ni), kharaj to mandra Sa, beads, jawari.

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