



The Line: A Futuristic City in the Desert

Imagine a city with **glow-in-the-dark beaches**, **trains that zoom faster than planes**, and **no cars at all**. Sounds like a video game, right? Well, Saudi Arabia is planning to build something just like this in the desert. It's called **Neom**, and its most famous part is **The Line** – a straight city 170 km (105 miles) long!

What is The Line?

Instead of spreading out like normal cities, The Line will be built in a perfectly straight line. Everything people need – schools, shops, parks – will be just a **five-minute walk or bike ride away**. To travel longer distances, people will use high-speed trains, with no journey taking more than 20 minutes.

Developers say it will be a **green city** with no cars, no pollution, and powered by solar and wind energy. There are even plans for **floating cities on the sea** and giant greenhouses to grow food.

Why is Saudi Arabia Building It?

Saudi Arabia is very rich because of its **oil**, but the world is trying to use less oil to fight climate change. So the country wants to find new ways to make money and look more eco-friendly. Neom is part of "**Vision 2030**", a plan to make the country less dependent on oil.

The Big Questions

Not everyone believes The Line will really work.

- Can a city in the desert grow enough food for itself?
- Can desalination (making sea water drinkable) be done without harming the oceans?
- Will renewable energy really be enough to power everything?

Some people also worry about **greenwashing** – when leaders make eco-friendly promises to look good, while still selling more oil.

Human Rights Concerns

The land chosen for Neom isn't empty. It's home to the **Huwaitat tribe**, who have lived there for generations. Reports say thousands of people have already been forced to leave their homes, and one man who refused to move was killed. Saudi officials deny wrongdoing, but human rights groups are alarmed.

Who Will Live There?

Promotional videos show futuristic towers, golf courses, and even palaces. Critics say the city might mostly benefit the rich and tourists, not ordinary people. Supporters, however, argue it will provide jobs and opportunities for everyone, from builders to billionaires.

The Verdict

Neom and The Line sound like something from science fiction. If it succeeds, it could change how cities are built in the future and help the planet. But for now, it's mostly **dreams and promises** – and there are big challenges to overcome.



1. What is the name of the futuristic city Saudi Arabia is planning to build?
2. How long will The Line be?
3. What types of energy are planned to power the city?
4. What types of transport are they encouraging people to use?
5. Why does Saudi Arabia want to build The Line and other Neom projects?
6. What is "Vision 2030"?
7. What does "greenwashing" mean in this article?
8. What questions do experts have about food in The Line?
9. What is desalination, and why might it be a problem for the oceans?
10. Who currently lives on the land chosen for Neom and what has happened?
11. Why do some critics think The Line might mostly benefit the rich?
12. Do you think The Line is a good idea? Explain your answer with reasons.

The Early Mughal Empire: Babur and Humayun - From Central Asia to India: The Birth of the Mughal Empire

The **Mughal Empire** became one of the most powerful and influential empires in the history of India. At its height, Mughal rulers controlled huge areas of South Asia and governed millions of people. The empire became famous for its wealth, architecture, military power and cultural achievements. However, the Mughal Empire did not begin as a strong or secure state. Its early rulers faced warfare, political rivalry and the constant danger of losing everything they had conquered.

Prior to the Mughals, India was divided into separate kingdoms rather than a unified nation. Northern India was dominated by the **Delhi Sultanate** under **Ibrahim Lodi** in the early 16th century. Internal strife and noble rivalries weakened Lodi's rule, leaving the wealthy, resource-rich region vulnerable to external invasion.

That outsider was **Zahir-ud-din Muhammad Babur**, better known as **Babur**. Babur was born in **1483** in the **Fergana Valley** in Central Asia. He came from a prestigious family. On his father's side, he claimed descent from the famous Central Asian conqueror **Timur**, while his mother's family was connected to **Genghis Khan**. Babur therefore grew up believing that he had a legitimate claim to rule.

Babur inherited the small kingdom of Fergana when he was only around eleven years old. His early life was extremely difficult. He fought repeatedly against rival rulers and sometimes gained and then lost territory. One of his greatest ambitions was to control the important city of **Samarkand**, but he struggled to hold it permanently. Eventually, Babur was forced to look elsewhere for land and power.

In **1504**, Babur captured **Kabul**, in modern-day Afghanistan. Kabul gave him a stronger base from which to build his forces. From there, Babur began to turn his attention towards northern India. India offered fertile land, large cities and considerable wealth. Political divisions within the Delhi Sultanate also made invasion appear possible.

Babur invaded northern India several times before launching his most important campaign. In **1526**, his army confronted Ibrahim Lodi at the **First Battle of Panipat**. Babur's forces were smaller than Lodi's army, but Babur had important advantages. His soldiers were experienced; he used disciplined cavalry, and crucially, he made effective use of **gunpowder weapons**, including cannons and matchlock firearms.

Babur also used clever battlefield tactics. His army positioned carts and defensive barriers in front of its troops while cavalry attacked from the sides. Lodi's much larger army struggled to respond effectively. Ibrahim Lodi was killed during the battle, and Babur achieved a decisive victory.

The Battle of Panipat was historically significant because it allowed Babur to capture **Delhi** and **Agra** and establish a new ruling dynasty. The victory of 1526 is usually regarded as the beginning of the **Mughal Empire in India**. However, Babur's position was still far from secure. He faced resistance from other powerful Indian rulers and had to win further battles to defend his new territory.

Babur died in **1530**, only four years after the Battle of Panipat. His son **Humayun** inherited the empire. Humayun therefore became the second Mughal emperor. Although he inherited important territory, he also inherited serious problems.

The early Mughal Empire remained **fragile**, meaning that it was weak and could easily collapse. Mughal control over India was still new. Many local rulers had their own armies and were unwilling to accept Mughal authority. Humayun also faced disagreements within his own family. Mughal princes sometimes expected to receive territory of their own, which could create rivalry between brothers.

One of Humayun's greatest rivals was the Afghan leader **Sher Shah Suri**. Sher Shah was an effective military commander who built support in northern India. Humayun struggled to defeat him. At the **Battle of Chausa in 1539** and the **Battle of Kannauj in 1540**, Humayun suffered major defeats.

After these defeats, Humayun lost control of much of his empire and was forced into **exile**. For several years, it appeared that the Mughal Empire created by Babur might disappear completely. Humayun travelled through different regions searching for allies and support. During his exile, his son **Akbar** was born in 1542.

Sher Shah Suri ruled much of northern India and introduced important reforms, including improvements to roads, taxation and administration. However, Sher Shah died in 1545. His successors were less successful, and the Sur Empire became divided.

Humayun eventually took advantage of this weakness. With military assistance from the Persian **Safavid Empire**, he rebuilt his forces. In **1555**, Humayun successfully returned to India and recaptured Delhi. The Mughal Empire had been restored.

Humayun's success did not last long. In **1556**, only months after regaining his empire, he died following an accident in which he fell down the stairs of his library. His young son **Akbar** became emperor.

The experiences of Babur and Humayun demonstrate how uncertain the early Mughal Empire was. Babur established Mughal rule through military skill and victory at Panipat, but his empire was still young and vulnerable. Humayun then lost almost the entire empire before eventually recovering it.

The survival of the Mughal Empire was therefore not inevitable. It depended on successful leadership, military power, alliances and the weaknesses of rival rulers. Under later emperors such as Akbar, the Mughal Empire would become much stronger, but its foundations had been created during the difficult reigns of Babur and Humayun.

1. Who ruled the Delhi Sultanate when Babur invaded northern India in 1526?

2. Where was Babur born, and in what year was he born?

3. Explain two reasons why Babur was interested in conquering northern India.

4. What happened at the First Battle of Panipat in 1526?

5. Identify two military advantages that helped Babur defeat Ibrahim Lodi.

6. Why was the Battle of Panipat an important turning point in Indian history?

7. Why was the Mughal Empire still fragile when Humayun became emperor in 1530? Give two reasons.

3. Who was Sher Shah Suri, and how did he threaten Humayun's rule?

1). Explain how Humayun was able to regain control of Delhi in 1555.

0. "Military strength was the main reason the Mughal Empire survived its early years."

How far do you agree?

Use evidence about **Babur**, **Humayun**, their enemies and their alliances in your answer.
