

India to build statue twice the size of the Statue of Liberty

Plans for the 630ft statue of a 16th century ruler have attracted much criticism - with thousands signing a petition against it.

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Image Caption: The statue will be built off the coast of Mumbai. Pic: @CMOMaharashtra

India is to build the world's tallest statue - twice the size of the Statue of Liberty.

The proposed 630ft (192 metre) statue of Shivaji, a 16th century ruler from western India, will be built off the coast of Mumbai.

The construction - on land reclaimed from the Arabian Sea - is due to be completed in 2019.

The country's Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for the project, expected to cost of 36bn rupees (£430m).

The statue will be more than 100ft higher than the current tallest monument - a 503ft Buddha in Henan province, China.



Image Caption:Narendra Modi goes to lay the foundation stone for the statue

But the project has attracted significant criticism.

More than 29,000 people have signed a petition asking the government to spend the money on infrastructure and development instead.

"Apart from a waste of money, this statue is going to be terrible for the environment, for the traffic situation in South Bombay and a security nightmare," the Change.org petition said.

It is not the first time a large amount of money has been spent on a statue in India.

In 2014, after Prime Minister Modi was sworn into office, the government set aside £27m in its national budget for building memorials.

Projects currently under way, including one in the Prime Minister's home state of Gujarat, have exceeded their budget ten-fold.