

Modi's visit sparks Indian bids for Croatia's infrastructure

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PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA

Modi's visit to Zagreb last month is prompting growing interest from Indian companies in major infrastructure projects in Croatia.

Over the past week, Afcons Infrastructure submitted three bids for state railway and road-building projects in the euro area's newest member, worth €1.1 billion (\$1.3 billion) in total. Another Indian company, a conglomerate led by Ashoka Buildcon, is also

vying for the same railway reconstruction contract as Afcons.

Croatian Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic praised India's growing interest in maritime trade routes to the Mediterranean when he met his Indian counterpart in June to discuss mutual economic and defence cooperation. New Delhi is a relative newcomer to the Balkans where Beijing has invested

heavily in infrastructure projects through its Belt and Road initiative.

A Chinese consortium led by China Road and Bridge Corporation built a 2.4 kilometer (1.5 miles) Peljesac bridge, Croatia's largest sea bridge, that opened in 2022 and was paid for mainly using European Union funds. It helped connect the country's coastal territory and bypass a strip of Bosnian territory in a boost to transport and tourism.

As part of

the tender process, the Mumbai-based Afcons on Monday submitted the lowest bid in the railway reconstruction tender by HZ Infrastruktura, estimated at €620 million. It's one of the biggest railroad plans in Croatia's modern history, financed in part from EU funds.

In the two other highway-building projects in southern Croatia, Afcons is facing competing bids from China Road and Bridge Corporation. Afcons bid €240.5 million and €214.4 million respectively.

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