

Ques 3) Losing Colombo port deal can be a lesson for India to focus more on better development of ports in the country.

Ans. A tripartite agreement was signed between India, Sri Lanka & Japan for development of East Container Terminal at Colombo, Sri Lanka. Unilateral withdrawal of Sri Lanka from the agreement and Iran's decision to unilaterally continue Chabahar port and railway project could be considered a set back for India's diplomacy agendas.

- India's dependence on Colombo port - 70% of the cargo handled by Colombo is either destined to India or to be exported to India.
- Lack of competitive alternative with good connectivity with major sea routes.
- Over 70% of India's international trade is moving by sea.
- India gets about 70% of its oil supplies from sea.
- Strategic location in Indian Ocean region & Strait of Malacca being busiest trade route, security in the Indian Ocean region & development of critical port infrastructure is of utmost necessity.

- Steps taken to strengthen port infrastructure :-
 - Government aims to develop Great Nicobar as the major shipping hub in lines of Colombo port, because of its strategic location in the region.
 - Hub port in Vizhinjam in Kerala is proposed to be developed to handle India's exports & imports cargo.
 - Sagarmala Project of port led development seeks to develop string of ports around Indian coast

- In Budget 2021 government aimed to develop 7 ports with an initial outlay of ₹2000 cr through PPP mode.
- Major Ports Authority Bill - 2020 aims to improve the autonomy of major ports through increasing private participation. & thus facilitating faster decision making & development of ports.

India's heavy reliance on sea routes for its exports & imports and for speedy achievement of sustainable development goals, development of port infrastructure is of utmost importance in line with self-reliance programme of Indian Government.