

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

**LOK SABHA  
UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.3901  
TO BE ANSWERED ON 25.03.2022**

**EAST CONTAINER TERMINAL**

3901. SHRI THIRUMAAVALAVAN THOL:

Will the Minister of External Affairs be pleased to state:

- (a) whether the strategic Colombo Port's East Container Terminal, which was planned to be constructed jointly by Sri Lanka, India and Japan have been dropped;
- (b) if so, the reasons therefor;
- (c) whether the Government is aware of the agreement entered into by Sri Lanka with China for building the above Colombo Port's East Container Terminal which may cause security risk to India; and
- (d) if so, the details thereof and the plan formulated/being formulated to protect the interest of the country from such losses that impact its security?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS  
[SHRI V. MURALEEDHARAN]

(a) to (d) India, Sri Lanka and Japan had signed a trilateral Memorandum of Cooperation (MoC) in May 2019 to develop and operate the East Container Terminal (ECT) of Colombo Port. It has been reported that the Cabinet of Ministers of Sri Lanka in a meeting held on 01 February 2021 approved a proposal to operate the ECT as a wholly owned container terminal of the Sri Lanka Ports Authority. The Cabinet of Ministers of Sri Lanka also approved the proposal to take necessary steps to develop and operate the West Container Terminal of the Port of Colombo as a public-private partnership with foreign parties on BOT basis.

The matter was taken up by High Commission of India with Government of Sri Lanka and the importance of adhering to international commitments in the context of the tripartite MoC was emphasized.

It has been stressed to Government of Sri Lanka that the development of infrastructure in Sri Lanka in areas such as ports and energy with foreign investment from India would be a mutually beneficial proposition, especially since most of the transshipment at Colombo Port is to and from India.

India's relations with other countries stand on their own footing and are independent of the relations of those countries with third countries. However, Government carefully monitors any developments having a bearing on India's security and economic interests, and takes all necessary measures to safeguard them.

\*\*\*