Syllabus subtopic: Bilateral, Regional and Global Groupings and Agreements involving India and/or affecting India’s interests.

Prelims and Mains focus: about the event and agreements signed; about CCIT

News: The first India-Africa Defence Ministers conclave was recently held at the ongoing Defexpo in Lucknow (UP).

About the event

The dialogue was attended by 12 Defence Ministers and 38 countries were represented at the conclave.

Cooperation agreements signed

India and several African countries pledged to deepen cooperation to combat the growing threat of terrorism and preserve maritime security by sharing information, intelligence and surveillance.

Lucknow declaration adopted

- It urged all countries to take resolute action in rooting out terrorism in all forms and manifestations, terrorist safe havens and infrastructure, disrupting terrorist networks and eliminating financing channels and halting cross-border movement of terrorists.

- It emphasised the need for stronger international partnership in countering terrorism and violent extremism, including through increased sharing of information and intelligence.

- The Declaration also called for strengthening the UN Counter-Terrorism mechanisms and to ensure strict compliance with the UN Security Council sanctions regime on terrorism.
• It urged the international community to envisage the adoption of Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism (CCIT) in the UNGA.

• **Maritime cooperation**: Cooperation in securing sea lines of communication, preventing maritime crimes, disaster, piracy, illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing through sharing of information and surveillance.

**About CCIT**

• The Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism is a **proposed treaty** which intends to **criminalize all forms of international terrorism** and deny terrorists, their financiers and supporters access to funds, arms, and safe havens.

• It is a **draft proposed by India in 1996** that is **yet to be adopted by the UNGA**.

**What does it propose?**

• **Universal definition of terrorism**: no good terrorist or bad terrorist.
• Ban on all groups regardless of country of operation, cut off access to funds and safe havens.
• Prosecution of all groups including cross border groups.
• Amending domestic laws to make cross-border terror an extraditable offence.
• It also addresses, among other things, the issue of Pakistan’s alleged support for cross-border terrorism in south Asia.

**Countries sceptical about it**

• US + allies: concerns over definition of terrorism, including acts by US soldiers in international interventions without UN mandate.
• Latin American countries: concerns over international humanitarian laws being ignored.
• There are also concerns that convention will be used to target Pakistan and restrict rights of self-determination groups in Palestine, Kashmir etc.