Act East in Manila

One issue. 4 GS papers. 3 dimensions. 1 regional partnership test.

⚡THE ISSUE IN 30 SECONDS

FACT	WHY IT MATTERS
India joins ASEAN summits in Manila	The ASEAN-India and East Asia Summits are on 16 and 17 November
Trade with ASEAN was about $128 billion	The review of the trade in goods agreement is still incomplete
2026 is the Year of Maritime Cooperation	Six ASEAN countries are linked with the Indian Ocean fusion centre
Plan of Action covers 2026 to 2030	Results will be judged by a forward-looking agenda for 2027

CORE IDEA: Act East is shifting from outreach to shaping a stable, inclusive Indo-Pacific with ASEAN, so India's test in Manila is to convert maritime, trade, digital and people-to-people gains into concrete outcomes such as concluding the trade review and setting a forward agenda for 2027 and beyond.

🧠THINK BEYOND

Regional uncertainty rises → **ASEAN centrality guides ties** → **Maritime cooperation deepens** → **The trade review stays unfinished** → **Digital and people links grow** → **The action plan turns goals into results**

Can Act East turn political goodwill into trade, digital and maritime outcomes?

🔗UPSC CONNECT

🌍 GS1 · SOCIETY
Cultural ties, education links and people-to-people exchange

Use in: Culture • People links

🏛 GS2 · GOVERNANCE
ASEAN, Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific diplomacy

Use in: ASEAN • Indo-Pacific

⚡ GS3 · ECONOMY
Trade, digital public infrastructure and the maritime economy

Use in: Trade • Digital

⚖ GS4 · ETHICS
Trust, cooperation and shared responsibility

Use in: Trust • Cooperation

🎯OPTIONAL CONNECT

PUB ADMIN
Maritime **coordination** and digital ties

PSIR
ASEAN, **Act East** and the Indo-Pacific

ECONOMICS
Trade, **AITIGA** and exports

GEOGRAPHY
Maritime **routes** and Southeast Asia

✏HOW CAN I USE THIS IN MAINS?

ESSAY *"Partnerships matter when they deliver outcomes, not only summits."*

GS3 *Use this to discuss trade, digital cooperation and the maritime economy.*

GS2 *Use it to discuss ASEAN, Act East Policy and Indo-Pacific diplomacy.*

GS4 *Use it to discuss trust, cooperation and shared responsibility.*

👤THINK LIKE AN OFFICER

★ KEY SECTION

CASE: You are a Joint Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry. Leaders will meet in Manila, and you must prepare outcomes that convert goodwill into trade, maritime and digital cooperation.

YOU HAVE 60 SECONDS: WHAT DO YOU DO?

☐ Aim for statements alone ☐ Skip trade issues

☐ Set concrete deliverables and timelines ☐ Delay the review further

MODEL ADMINISTRATIVE APPROACH

1 · CONCLUDE TRADE REVIEW
Seek political direction to finish the AITIGA review

2 · DEEPEN MARITIME TIES
Expand domain awareness, search and rescue, cable safety

3 · LINK DIGITAL SYSTEMS
Advance payment links and start-up collaboration

4 · BUILD PEOPLE LINKS
Grow education, tourism and skills exchanges

🔑3 THINGS TO REMEMBER

01 · CONNECT
Goodwill must become outcomes

02 · THINK
ASEAN centrality guides Act East

03 · APPLY
Apply this across GS1-4, Essay and optionals