

# Note from the Editor

India's geographical breadth and reach, has ensured an extensive and extended neighbourhood which has provided the policymakers with a complex range of difficulties that are almost a microcosm of the challenges confronting the global community as a whole. As a result, India's foreign policy toward its extended neighbourhood, like that of any other country, must embrace the goals of improving opportunities for its citizens to maintain and enrich their life by providing them a safe and secure environment.

Keeping this in the background, the CLAWS Journal 2022 Summer issue has selected the theme—"India's Strategic Neighbourhood". The phrase "strategic neighbourhood" can be defined in a variety of ways. Apart from Pakistan, Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh, nations sharing land and maritime borders with India include China, Myanmar, Indonesia, Thailand, Sri Lanka, and the Maldives, and this goes beyond the geographical description of South Asia. Several countries outside of this list are also linked to India through close economic and diasporic ties, as well as developments perceived by Indian policymakers as having strategic implications; this category includes countries along the Indian Ocean, the East African coast, the Gulf region, Afghanistan, the Central Asian region, and countries in Southeast Asia.

India's immediate strategic neighbourhood remains in complicated security and foreign-policy dilemma in and of itself, having boundary disputes with China and Pakistan, both of which have significant military capabilities, including nuclear weapons, and a strong relationship, posing a challenge to Indian policymakers. Because these borders are not natural and there are overlapping ethnic communities on both sides, instability and uncertainty in relationships but also uncontrollable migration, cross-

border insurgent and criminal linkages, as well as domestic political pressures on the Indian leadership are sometimes related to developments across the border. This unrest feeds into India's strategic ties with neighbouring nations, complicating any efforts to address the looming 'non-traditional' challenges.

India's immediate as well as extended neighbourhoods are also a source of technology, energy, beneficial economic and commercial cooperation as well as mutually enriching cultural exchanges. Whilst the negative tendencies need to be countered, opportunities need to be nurtured, by going beyond the zero-sum thinking, for India to grow into a technologically sophisticated and socio-economically enriched society. Problems that were remote until a few decades ago are now closer to home due to India's growing role, economic ties, and large diaspora. Tensions in the ostensibly faraway waters of the East China Sea, South China Sea, Mediterranean, and remote areas of the Indian Ocean region directly influence India. Hence it is time that we intensively engage with our immediate neighbours on all fronts be it strategic, economic, socio-political and people to people exchanges.

Editor-in-Chief