

CHIEF EDITOR'S NOTE

DR HAPPYMON JACOB

I am honoured to bring to you the inaugural issue of *The Indo-Pacific Review*, the flagship journal of 'The Indo-Pacific Circle'. Before I introduce *The Indo-Pacific Review*, a few words about the idea of the Indo-Pacific. Indo-Pacific—the rechristened expression for a historical continuum spanning millennia with contemporary geopolitical meanings and implications—is very much in its infancy, intellectually and otherwise. The region, of course, may not be new - geographically, geopolitically or geo-economically - but the reimagination of the region is both new and contested.

The Indo-Pacific is poised to become the epicentre of a great deal of geopolitical activity in the near future, and is attracting a lot of political and strategic attention. Even as it is one of the most discussed and debated geopolitical concepts of our times, there are certain foundational questions that remain unanswered: How do we conceptualize the Indo-Pacific as a geopolitical entity today? How do we define a rule-based order for the region? What are some of the values and rules that contribute to such an order?

More importantly, who will define the Indo-Pacific? What is the vision/s that will guide the imagination and construction of the region? (For, after all, regions do not come ready-made; they are political constructions) At the Indo-Pacific Circle, we believe that however one defines the Indo-Pacific, India and the ASEAN will be at the heart of it, both physically and as a mental map. Mental maps matter as they lend meanings to physical regions.

Indo-Pacific's (still unsettled) geography and mental map show the centrality of the ASEAN and India (as does China except that China has not used this mental imagery of the Indo-Pacific yet) in shaping the region. This journal intends to highlight the varying cartographies, mental maps and imageries about the region across domains such as geopolitics, geoeconomics, climate, development and gender, among others.

INDO-PACIFIC REVIEW

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The Indo-Pacific Circle began with the objective of generating ideas, networks, and debates from within the region so as to contribute to shaping the global narratives on the Indo-Pacific. As an intellectual collective of emerging leaders, I hope the network and the journal will contribute to the creation of a free, open and rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific region that, to quote India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, “respects sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the equality of nations.” The Indo-Pacific Circle and *The Indo-Pacific Review* are premised on the strong belief that the inhabitants of the region have the right, and responsibility, to provide intellectual sustenance to a process which will define and curate locally sensitive narratives about the region. We are deeply conscious of the reality that the Indo-Pacific region is not a monolith. There are indeed diverse narratives about the Indo-Pacific even within the region. So, the objective of the journal is not to privilege any one narrative, but to bring together multiple narratives and provide a platform for dialogue and debates. The biannual, online peer-reviewed journal will curate views on the Indo-Pacific from around the world by scholars and practitioners including, primarily, by the IPC members.

The Indo-Pacific Review, therefore, is an attempt from within the region to contribute to the rich, growing debate in the scholar and practitioner communities in and around the Indo-Pacific. I am certain that the journal will become an authoritative, scholarly and reasoned voice on the Indo-Pacific in the years to come.

Dr Happymon Jacob

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

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