

The Hindu January 28, 2025

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Kristu Jayanti College(KJC) in collaboration with the University of Auckland, New Zealand, hosted a two-day international conference on "Asia's Maritime History and Identity at Cultural Crossroads." The event, which gathered over 450 people and had 230 paper presentations, looked into Asia's rich maritime legacy and its impact on cultural identity, trade, and interconnection. Col. Dr. DPK Pillay (Retd.), a Research Fellow at the Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses and a recipient of the Shaurya Chakra award, inaugurated the conference. Dr. Pillay emphasized in his keynote speech the close ties that have been cultivated across Asian civilizations through maritime exploration, trade, and cross-cultural interactions. The gathering was presided over by Fr. Dr. Lijo P. Thomas, VP of KJC, who emphasized the need of these conversations in comprehending the complicated identities of today. Distinguished experts participated in the discussion, including Prof. Dr. Mark Barrow, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Education, University of Auckland; Dr. Esther Fitzpatrick, Director, Graduate Diploma in Teaching, University of Auckland; and Dr. Maya Vinai, Associate Professor at BITS Pilani & other important speakers. The event included a compelling display of curated works by artist Paul Fernandes and student-led art installations that provided visual insights into nautical history. It encouraged transdisciplinary collaboration, connecting local marine history to global narratives and raising awareness of environmental and cultural challenges. It successfully facilitated a cross-cultural discourse, broadening our awareness of Asia's varied marine legacy.