

### Report on the visit of NECARF team to Dioceses

A three-member team of the North East Catholic Research Forum, consisting of David Boyes, Philip Lyngdoh, and John S. Shilshi, visited six dioceses of the region (Jowai, Nongstoin, Tura, Bongaigaon, Diphu, and Tezpur), and had meaningful interaction with the bishops, priests, and lay Catholics. The tour began with the Jowai diocese on October 21 and concluded with Tezpur on October 27, 2025. This was the second phase of such visits to different dioceses of the region, which began in 2023. In the earlier phase, the NECARF team had visited the Aizawl, Agartala, Itanagar, Miao, Dibrugarh, and Kohima dioceses.



*With Bishop and lay leader of Jowai*



*Meeting in Nongstoin with Bishop and lay leaders*

During the meetings, the visiting members apprised the church hierarchy and the lay Catholics of what the NECARF stands for and highlighted some of the significant interventions against certain policies and developments it felt were detrimental to the interests of the Christian community in general and the Catholic Church in particular, since the forum's inception in 2020. The team also noted feedback from various dioceses. Among them were reports about a few young people who were won over by the RSS and taken to outside their state. On their return, they tried to convince their parents to stop consuming beef.



*Discussion with lay leaders in Bongaigaon*



*With Bishop Paul Matekat in Diphu*

There were also reports of some former students of Christians schools who since joined the ABVP, insisting that they be allowed to organise meetings in the schools. The team suggested ways and means of responding to such developments tactfully and without disturbing the peace and harmonious co-existence with other religious groups.

In Diphu diocese, the NECARF representatives could not meet the lay leaders due to some unavoidable circumstances. However, the bishop and the priest in charge of the laity were briefed in detail about NECARF and the purpose of the visit. They were also requested to brief the lay leaders accordingly.



*Team with Bishop Jose in Tura*



*Meeting with Bishop and lay leaders in Tezpur*

Over all, the meetings have been fruitful, and the NECARF team deeply appreciates the kind cooperation of the bishops, priests, and lay people, who went out of their way to ensure their presence, active participation, and support. We are confident that these meetings will strengthen lay Catholic unity in the region to speak up in one voice whenever the Church needs us.

**(David Boyes)**

**(Philip Lyngdoh)**

**(John S. Shilshi)**