

# Papal visit aims to seek 'a war-free Middle East'

Pope Francis will be the first Pope to visit the Kingdom of Bahrain

● Historic three-day apostolic journey set from November 3 to 6 this year

● Scheduled to visit Arabian Gulf's largest Roman Catholic Church in Awali

● To participate in forum to promote East and West human coexistence

Staff Reporter  
TDT | Manama

The upcoming visit of 'Vicar of Christ' to the Kingdom is in line with the Vatican's and Pope Francis' aim to seek a 'war-free Middle East', Union of Catholic Asian News reported.

"The Supreme Pontiff was supposed to visit Bahrain as early as 2014 after the first meet-

ing at the Vatican between Pope Francis and King Hamad.

"But the United Arab Emirates visit came first. The Pope signed the Declaration for Human Fraternity for World Peace and Living Together along with Shaikh Ahmed Al Tayeb in Abu Dhabi on Feb 4, 2019. His Majesty King Hamad has endorsed the Document on Human Fraternity as a major milestone to foster religious harmony," the report said.

The report also praises the Kingdom for "being the greatest nation of tolerance in the whole region and world".

Pope Francis will travel to the Kingdom for a three-day visit in November – an occasion that is expected to attract tens of thousands of Catholics and other followers.

The pontiff, 85, will visit the Arabian Gulf's largest Roman Catholic Church in Awali.

This will be the second visit by the head of the church to the Arabian Gulf after Pope Francis' historic visit to the UAE in 2019.

"Pope Francis will make the announced apostolic journey



Vatican report has praised the Kingdom of Bahrain for "being the greatest nation of tolerance in the whole region and world."

to Bahrain from November 3 to 6 this year, visiting the cities of Manama and Awali on the occasion of the Bahrain Forum for Dialogue: East and West for Human Coexistence."

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The Royal Court later confirmed the news, announcing that Pope Francis will pay a historic visit upon the invitation of His Majesty.

His Holiness will participate in the "Bahrain Forum for Dialogue: East and West for Human Coexistence," to be held under



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— UNION OF CATHOLIC ASIAN NEWS REPORT

the patronage of His Majesty the King, the Royal Court said.

The Royal Court looks forward to welcoming His Holiness the Pope to the Kingdom of Bahrain, acknowledging his sincere efforts to promote a culture of dialogue and peaceful coexistence, a statement issued said.

His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa met Pope Francis during His Majesty's visit to the Vatican on May 19, 2014.

During the occasion, His Majesty also held talks with the Cardinal Secretary of State Pietro Parolin and the former Secretary for Relations with States, Archbishop Dominique Mamberti.

According to a Holy See Press Office statement at the time, cordial discussions between the Bahraini King and the Pope focused on various themes of common interest, "with particular reference to the commitment towards peace and stability in the Middle East, as well as the promotion of dialogue and peaceful co-existence among all members of society."

Mention was also made of the Christian community's positive contribution to the country, and "appreciation was expressed for His Majesty's personal interest in the needs of the local Catholic community".

## Bahrain's second global forum on oil spills and environmental preservation

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Minister of Oil and Environment and Special Envoy for Climate Affairs Dr Mohammed bin Mubarak Bin Daina inaugurated the 2nd international Conference & Exhibition on Spills, Clean Seas & Environment under the theme Sustainable Clean Seas.

The conference includes more than 500 participants, 60 international speakers and 30 companies representing more than 20 countries.

It aims to discuss the most important topics related to oil spills, exchanging knowledge and experiences, and reviewing best practices in oil spills and environmental preservation.

Dr Bin Daina thanked the organising committee for the efforts made in organising this global event and for choosing Bahrain to hold the conference



Dr Bin Daina at the ribbon-cutting ceremony in its second edition.

He stressed the Kingdom's keenness to provide support to such specialised conferences with a positive outcome on the environmental knowledge and development system, in addition to maintaining a clean environment free of pollutants.

The Minister noted the importance of the topics that the conference will address such as sustainable clean seas in terms of readiness, response and adaptation, crisis management, communications and media management, and the role and impact of leadership in managing oil spills.

He stressed the ministry's keenness to organise these conferences, which are considered among the training programs offered to creative Bahrainis capable of finding innovative, proactive and flexible solutions to face various spill types.

## Left lane closure set

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Works Ministry said that the development work of Bani Utbah Street necessitates the closure of the left lane on the intersection with Osama Bin Zaid Street and its intersection with Street 3801 (Gulf Hotel) for eastbound traffic to Al Fateh Street.

## 23 face trial in BD75 million money laundering case

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The High Criminal Court has begun hearing a money laundering case worth BD75 million which involves 23 defendants who obtained a BD500 million loan from one of the Gulf countries.

They conducted money laundering operations on the amount

after defrauding the bank and evading installment payments.

Among the eight defendants are four British, a Turkish, an American, two Bahrainis, and an Asian, in addition to 15 companies which the suspects used to legalise the money.

The defendants were able to get a \$500 million bank loan

while they were in one of the Gulf countries.

They were successful in obtaining the loan after submitting papers and documents claiming their fields of business and investments. They made several transfers of money to various countries abroad and conducted suspicious commercial opera-

tions on the money to conceal the source of the funds and claim their authenticity.

According to investigations, they got the loan and transported \$75 million to Bahrain under the guise of investment, through the acquisition of real estate and land, as well as the formation of multiple fictional firms.

The two Bahrainis, who are brothers, attempted to disguise the source of the money to help the other defendants.

Meanwhile, the court decided to postpone the next session until October 18, 2022 to allow the defendants' lawyers to review the papers of the case and respond.