

Shaikha Mai congratulates Pololikashvili despite facing “unfair” UNWTO election

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Despite being denied a fair chance to compete to the top UNWTO post, Bahrain's Shaikha Mai bint Mohammed Al Khalifa yesterday gracefully congratulated winning candidate Zurab Pololikashvili.

The election, which many international publications accused as a “scam”, was won by its current Secretary-General Zurab Pololikashvili.

Shaikha Mai was the only candidate to challenge Pololikashvili, as other potential candidates failed to submit their applications.

Reports said the UNWTO secretariat under Zurab rejected six applications, without specifying reasons.

Travel restriction and lack of time also slimmed Shaikha Mai's chances which turned in favour of Zurab.

The election was brought forward from its usual date in May to January and the submission of candidatures from end March 2021 to November 17, tightening the nomination and campaign timeframe.

Shaikha Mai said the move failed to give member countries sufficient time to approve candidacies and made it difficult for candidates to carry out appropriate election campaign.

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The election of a secretary-general was held under difficult circumstances and in an atmosphere that did not reflect fair competition between the candidates

SHAIKHA MAI BINT MOHAMMED AL KHALIFA

THE PRESIDENT OF THE BAHRAIN AUTHORITY FOR CULTURE AND ANTIQUITIES (BACA) AND BAHRAIN'S CANDIDATE



The decision created “an atmosphere that did not reflect fair competition between the candidates,” accused Shaikha Mai.

The date change also caught many others by surprise including two UNWTO chiefs who served for 20 years. Francesco Frangialli (from 1998 to 2010) and Dr Taleb Rifai (from 2010 to 2017), published a vitriolic statement denouncing the change of election date.

The election took place on

January 19, the second day of the two-day UNWTO 113th Executive Council meeting in the Spanish capital. The Council has 35 members representing 20% of the 159 members of UNWTO.

The UNWTO General Assembly planned for October in Morocco will have to confirm the result.

Shaikha Mai, the first woman vying for the UNWTO top post,

said, “despite the result, I am happy to have represented Bahrain in the global event.”

“I extend my sincere thanks and gratitude to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and His Royal Highness Prince Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the Crown Prince and Prime Minister, for honouring me with their trust,” added Shaikha Mai. Shaikha Mai also thanked the

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Communication Center and the countries that supported her candidature.

“I will continue to work locally, regionally and globally to support the tourism sector and upgrade the tourism cultural infrastructure to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and boost local communities,” Shaikha Mai said.

What happened?

- A physical meeting for the 112th Executive Council members was held in his Georgia in September 2020. Coronavirus made it difficult for any council member to attend, according to eturbnews.

- Georgia summit moved dates for the 113th Council meeting to January 18-19 instead of May. The reason was to have an event coincide with FITUR, the global meeting point for tourism professionals and the leading trade fair for inbound and outbound markets in Latin America. However, FITUR was cancelled just days after this.

- New candidates are required to register their interest to compete with Zurab within six weeks.

- Seven candidates registered and the UNWTO secretariat under Zurab rejected six applications.



The World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) is the United Nations specialised agency entrusted with the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism. It is the leading international organisation in the field of tourism, which promotes tourism as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers the sector leadership and support in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide



UNWTO's membership includes 158 countries, six territories and over 500 affiliate members representing the private sector, educational institutions, tourism associations and local tourism authorities

Police arrest intoxicated woman

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Capital Police took into custody a woman for creating ruckus in a public place in an inebriated condition.

Police were acting on a video clip that went viral on social media.

Officials also said they received several complaints against the woman's “outrageous” behaviour.

The video clip showed a 34-year-old woman, an African national, in a drunken stupor, creating commotion in a public place in Sitra.

People in the area said she walked into the neighbourhood at night in an abnormal condition.

Police took her into custody in less than 24-hours after the footage went viral.

The video shows her yelling, cursing and occasionally dancing while also attacking the man videotaping her, accusing him of “chasing” her.

The man holding the camera denies the accusation.

Netizens condemned the woman's action as inappropriate, complaining of several such activities in residential areas here.

Interior ministry in a statement confirmed the incident



Screen grab of the video showing the woman in Sitra

and arrest of the woman.

“Legal proceedings are taken against an African woman, 34, for being in a public place in a drunken state and disturbing other,” Interior Ministry said

in a tweet.

A similar incident was reported from Smaheej village in Muharraq a few weeks ago. There a citizen filmed a group of African expatriates, a man and

two women, walking in an inebriated state around the village in “immodest” outfits. Interior Ministry confirmed taking legal action against people in the footage.

Indian embassy to celebrate 72nd Republic Day

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Indian Embassy will hold a flag hoisting ceremony at the Embassy complex on 26 January 2021 at 7:30 am on the occasion of 72nd Republic Day of India.

The flag hoisting will be followed by Ambassador Piyush Srivastava reading a message of the President of India.

The embassy will also virtually celebrate the Republic Day of India at 7:00 pm.

The embassy statement said, “Due to Covid-19 situation and the prevailing local guidelines regarding social distancing and restrictions of large gatherings, physical participation of the Indian community and friends of India in Bahrain in



the celebrations would not be possible this year.”

The embassy, however, said it would telecast live the flag hoisting ceremony in the morning, and the virtual celebration in the evening on its social media accounts.

Twitter - <https://twitter.com/IndiaInBahrain>

Facebook- <https://www.facebook.com/IndiaInBahrain>

Youtube - <https://www.youtube.com/EmbassyofIndiaBahrain>

BFC shuts Airport branch

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Bahrain Financing Company (BFC) announced closing down its branch located in the arrival area at Bahrain International Airport (Shop 44, Building 212, Road 2404, Block 224) with effect from 28th January 2021. BFC said, “Customers can alternatively visit the nearby BFC Arad, Hidd or Muharraq branches or any other branches for making transaction or general enquiries.”

For further information, call +973 1722 8888 or visit website at www.bfc.com.bh