

Sidra's mHealth set to revolutionise wellness in Qatar

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mobile enabled cameras and provided with medication and instructions.

He said that the moment Sidra opens its doors, benefits of mobile health will be provided to the patients. "When the patients register with Sidra through a biometric scanning or other means to identify the patient, they will get the patient portal which will provide all the details about them," he said.

"All these are connected to the Sidra system and the patients are provided with a login password and other details. When they are discharged they are given all the information and the parents or relatives of the patients know how to go about further medication and consultation," he added.

Erskine said that the patient portal is already up and being tested. "All the things expected of a patient are already in the portal and we are also getting in touch with people about their expectations to make sure that it is culturally appropriate and serves all their needs. Once a piece of information is available about a patient it straightaway goes to the portal," he continued.

"In Qatar you are about to experience a major transformation in the healthcare environment. Sidra Medical

and Research Center will be a beacon of learning, discovery and exceptional care, ranked among the top academic medical centres in the world. It will be coordinated among all the other healthcare providers in Qatar and it will be mobile," he added.

Erskine said that Qatar is making great strides towards providing a remarkable primary healthcare system and has a national vision pointing the way.

He said "mHealth has several advantages that are specific to Qatar. Sidra will not only be focusing on the patients who come to the hospital but the whole pediatric population of Qatar. We will be taking pediatric in the broadest definition. It will include counselling before conception, helping genetic issues, sorting out pre-natal care, identifying patients at risk and any intervention during the pregnancy or immediately after the delivery."

He was quick to add that the quick care facility needs the support of all primary care departments to engage a primary care network and follow up on a patient discharged from the hospital.

He said that the fibre network initiated in the country by ictQatar, Qtel and Vodafone will be a great help for the success of mHealth. He opined "Both the telecom

operators are investing lot in increasing the quality and bandwidth of the internet through fiber network. We will have four links to Internet next year instead of the one at present. This is very important for mHealth. The FTH technology is important, as this will enable to get accurate information from patients' homes to have image information or video information of a patient."

He explained that the images of a wound getting healed need more bandwidth but to send weight balance sensor data needs very little bandwidth. "With FTH, this can be worked out in more robust way," he concluded.

There are some obvious and fundamental benefits of mHealth such as the use of toll-free numbers for emergencies, appointment reminders and awareness-raising but advancement in mobile technology has also brought incredible and potentially live saving benefits as well.

For example, Erskine highlighted the area of medication compliance, which is ensuring a patient is taking the right amount of medication.

This can be particularly important for transplant patients who must take their anti-rejection medication to ensure their vital organ, be it a heart, lung or kidney, is not rejected by the body.



Baroness Patricia Scotland (centre), former attorney-general of England and Wales, at the opening session on 'Anti-corruption-the rule of law and economic, political and social development' at the Qatar Law Forum, in Doha, on Saturday. (MANEESH BAKSHI)

Law Forum backs Qatar's pledge to rule of law

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"the theme of the forum is reflected in its title, 'the rule of law in a time of change'. It is for one reason that the theme was chosen, namely that Qatar is committed to the rule of law."

The events of the first day included three plenary sessions on the subjects of anti-

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corruption, the rule of law and change in the world, and the role of ethics and law in finance, the latter ses-

sion chaired by the Qatar Central Bank Governor Abdullah bin Saoud al Thani. Specialist discussions on a variety of topics, from legal aspects of the 2022 World Cup to Dispute resolution in Islamic Finance, were also held.

Sunday is the last day of the forum, opening with a keynote address by Prime

Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs HE Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabor al Thani.

A second keynote is to be delivered by the Minister of Economy and Finance HE Yusef Hussain Kamal.

Three plenary sessions are also scheduled for the day, as well as further specialist discussions.

Sarah Ferguson case hearing adjourned

AP
ANKARA



Sarah Ferguson

THE trial of Britain's Duchess of York for allegedly taking part in the secret filming of two orphanages in Turkey has been adjourned so the plaintiffs can evaluate a proposed out-of-court settlement, Turkey's state-run news agency said.

Sarah Ferguson faces charges of going "against the law in acquiring footage and violating privacy" of five children at one of the orphan-

ages, the Anadolu Agency said. If convicted, she could receive a maximum sentence of 22 1/2 years in prison.

The trial began Friday, and Ferguson did not attend the opening session.

Ahmadinejad's support crumbles in Iran

AP
TEHRAN

PRESIDENT Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's support in Iran's parliament crumbled as final results released on Saturday showed conservative rivals consolidating their hold on the legislative body in a runoff vote.

Iran has touted a robust turnout for Friday's vote as a show of support for the country's religious leadership in its confrontation with the West over the Islamic Republic's controversial nuclear programme. The result is also a

new humiliation for Ahmadinejad, whose political decline started last year with his bold but failed challenge of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei over the choice of intelligence chief.

While usually in agreement with the conservatives on foreign policy and many other issues, he had tried to change the rules of the political game in Iran, where the president and legislature are subordinate to religious figures like Khamenei.

Ahmadinejad's opponents had already won an outright majority in the 290-member

legislature in the first round of voting in March. Of 65 seats for grabs in Friday's runoff election, Ahmadinejad's opponents won 41 while the president's supporters got only 13 seats. Independents won 11, according to final results reported on Saturday by state media.

The president's supporters had their best showing in the capital Tehran. Ahmadinejad's conservative critics won 16 seats while his supporters took nine.

Iran's major reformist parties, which oppose both Ahmadinejad and the conser-

vatives, mostly did not field candidates.

The new parliament will begin its sessions in late May. It has no direct control over key foreign and security policy matters like Iran's nuclear program, but it can influence those issues and economic policies as well as the run-up to the election of Ahmadinejad's successor. Ahmadinejad is constitutionally barred from seeking a third consecutive four-year term and must step down in 2013.

The results suggest Ahmadinejad will face a more beligerent parliament in the

remaining time of his second four-year term in office that ends on August 2013. His allies are likely to be ousted from key posts, and his plan to cut economic subsidies challenged.

No final figures were released, but Iran's media has claimed that the turnout on Saturday matched that of the initial round of voting on March 2, when 64 percent of voters reportedly cast ballots.

"Mass turnout in runoff parliamentary elections," declared a front-page headline in the government-run *Iran Daily*.

Summer scorcher hits fitness freaks along the Corniche

ALJAZEERA
DOHA

HOT weather across the Arabian Peninsula is hardly unusual. But even by Gulf standards things have been really heating up over the last few days.

Doha has just recorded its warmest day of the year, so far. On Saturday the temperature touched an impressive 44.1 degree Celsius. This is the fifth day in succession that temperatures have topped the 40 degree Celsius mark.

Nighttime temperatures have also been exceptional: between 27 and 29 degrees C Celsius compared with an average of 21 to 23 degree Celsius. The hot weather has not been confined to Doha. Bahrain and Saudi Arabia have also experienced temperatures well above 40 degree Celsius.

The region enjoys a sub-tropical arid climate with hot summers, temperature winters and very little rainfall. A rise in temperatures might initially have been welcomed by many people as the winter

and spring months were perceived to have been unusually cold and windy.

'Cold' is a relative term, of course. The coldest day experienced in Doha in March was the 18th, when temperatures reached no higher than 18 degree Celsius. But the wind has also contributed to the chilly feel.

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Brisk winds are a feature of winter and spring in the region with the Shamal wind bringing poor visibility, in the form of lifted dust, and a chilly feel to the weather.

The air is extremely dry out here. A temperature of 40 degree Celsius or more may be accompanied by a relative humidity as low as five percent. The cooling effect on

the skin is considerable and people who live in more temperate climes are often amused when they hear friends or family who live in Doha complaining about the 'cold' weather.

The current hot spell is due to an area of high pressure and winds blowing from a south to southwesterly direction.

This brings air in from the Rub' al Khali, also known as the Empty Quarter. The air is warmed as it feeds in from the sandy desert.

The wind direction is crucial. The waters of the Arabian Gulf are relatively cool in April with temperatures of just 20 degree Celsius although that increases rapidly during May and June.

So any breeze from the sea can have a marked cooling effect.

This has been absent in the current weather pattern. It is expected that the hot weather will continue, with the forecast for the next five days showing Doha temperatures reaching at least 40 degree Celsius each day.



BEAT THE HEAT: A fitness freak with her dogs skates on the walkway along the Corniche despite the blazing sun, in Doha, on Saturday. (JALAL PATHIYOOR)