

### **DELAY IN TELECOM PRIVATIZATION**

The government has postponed the auction of the two mobile-phone companies because of a political stalemate over the election of a president. "We had committed ourselves to this February, but we will not take a decision before a new president and a new government take over," said the Ministry of Telecommunications. The delay has been announced for three months. The government, which will retain a third of the shares in the two companies, MTC Touch and Alfa, plans to use revenue from the sale to repay part of its debt. Revenue from telecommunications accounts for about 40 percent of the state's income. "We need a

good climate to attract investors before auctioning the companies," it said. According to the ministry, Saudi Telecom, Etisalat, Qtel, Zain, Batelco, and Orascom have all expressed an interest in bidding.

▶ [L0208-28](#)