

Lebanon's telecom authority looks to attract investment

BEIRUT: The president of the Telecom Regulatory Authority (TRA) Kamal Shehadi said on Thursday the authority was making preparations to establish a national-broadband and local-broadband access licensing process to attract new investment and enable the build-up of new infrastructure that will provide next generation services.

Speaking at a workshop in the presence of Telecom Minister Jebran Bassi, Shehadi said the TRA was also preparing to launch more broad bands in the next few months.

"Our goal is to catch up with other advanced countries in technology and Internet services. Many investors are looking for high speed broad bands," Shehadi told *The Daily Star*.

He added that Lebanon has good infrastructure and investors can have easy access to these utilities through leasing it from the government.

According to the Use of Public Properties Study, the fundamental component of these new networks would be the use of Lebanon's public properties for fixed and wireless infra-

structure, including the use of public rights of way, ducts, poles, towers, rooftops and other related assets and facilities currently owned and administered by the public sector.

Access to the public properties discussed in this study will enable a licensed service provider to build its network infrastructure utilizing public rights of way and existing public passive infrastructure (such as ducts, poles, towers, etc.) thus reducing network rollout costs and shortening the time to introduce needed services to the business-

es and population of Lebanon.

"Article 35 of the Telecommunications Law contemplates that all licensed service providers will enjoy unlimited access to public properties for use in connection with telecommunications infrastructure. Lebanon boasts an extensive public property portfolio that, when made available in accordance with Article 35, will greatly reduce the costs to telecommunications services providers in building and operating modern telecommunications networks," according to TRA. – *The Daily Star*