ICT

TRA GOES DIGITAL

The Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (TRA) will soon be managing its work through an internal online platform. The new system will require around a year to be implemented. It will improve documentation and automate workflows, resulting in more efficiency. The administration will be funding the program through a grant from the World Bank.

4G COMING IN APRIL

4G mobile Internet services will be available for users by April, said Minister of Telecommunications *Nicolas Sehnaoui*. "The 4G technology will be commercially launched on April 23 in selected areas," he said. With the 4G network, download speeds could be five times faster than the current average. The transition from 3G to 4G is expected to run smoothly. The tariffs for the 4G service are not yet finalized. Sehnaoui said: "Feasibility studies are still in progress in order to figure out the appropriate price. But it will be more expensive than the 3G subscription."

BERYTECH: NEW BUILDING, NEW FUND

Berytech will operate the second building of the Beirut Digital District (BDD), which will be officially launched in January. BDD 1499, the first building in this ICT hub, was inaugurated earlier this year. The BDD is being developed by Zein Real Estate with a total investment expected to reach $150 million. *Maroun Chammas*, Chairman of Berytech, said several contracts were signed with ICT firms to relocate to the BDD. "We are very optimistic and the project has great potential, especially since we have considerable local talent," he said. The new building's space totals around 2,000 m^2 spread over six floors. Berytech will also launch a $30-million fund for creative and ICT firms.

FIBER OPTICS NETWORK

The first part of the fiber optics Internet network will be completed by April. The project costs around $45 million and involves interconnecting the central networks in the different regions. It also includes providing fiber optics connection to heavy users, including banks, hospitals, and universities.