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\$9m network to monitor Daya Bay

By ANDY HO

A \$9 MILLION communications network will be installed next year to ensure that Government emergency command units are fed first-hand radioactivity data in the event of a nuclear mishap at Daya Bay.

The emergency data links will form a cornerstone of the Government's contingency plan to deal with any fallout at the Sino-Hongkong atomic power station, now being developed about 30 kilometres northeast of the border.

The proposed radio system, devised by the Postmaster General, will require a further \$808,000 a year to maintain.

Tendering procedures for the facilities will start later this month after the Government clears it with the Legislative Council's Finance Committee on Friday.

The Director of Electrical and Mechanical Services, Mr Mao Chi, has also asked for an additional telecommunications assistant specifically for the installation and maintenance of the network.

The network will ensure that the Civil Co-ordination Centre at the Government Secretariat, the Royal Observatory's Monitoring and Assessment Centre, and the Police Headquarters Command and Control Centre are constantly hooked up with the Daya Bay early alarm system.

The facilities will enable data collected at the Royal Observatory's 10 radioactivity monitoring units throughout the territory to be relayed to its Monitoring and Assessment Centre.

The Royal Observatory earlier spent \$30.8 million upgrading its outdoor radioactivity monitoring capability.

The communications network will also transmit data, facsimile and voice information directly from Daya Bay to the assessment and command centres here.

The Government can now communicate with the atomic power plant through standard international telephone, telex and facsimile services. But officials are eager to install a dedicated microwave network to ensure security and reliability.

The Government will have to share the China

Light and Power Company's microwave link between Daya Bay and its Shek Uk Shan radio station, from where data will be transmitted to the police, Royal Observatory and the Government Secretariat.

China Light, through a fully-owned subsidiary, holds 25 per cent of the stake in the \$28.8 billion Daya Bay joint venture with China.

Separate microwave circuits covering signal repeaters will have to be installed at Shek Uk Shan, Kowloon Park and Mount Fough.

The hilltop repeater at Shek Uk Shan will offer radio coverage over the north-eastern part of the territory to relay data collected at the outdoor monitoring stations.

A secondary back-up communication path which relies on leased circuits provided by China Light and the Hongkong Telephone Company will also be set up.

Secured facsimile terminals and operator stations equipped with telephone handsets and voice recording facilities will be installed at all the three assessment and command centres.