

26 days till Daya Bay deal signed

Shenzhen picked as venue

SIGNING of the major contracts for the Daya Bay nuclear power plant will take place on September 24 or 25, reliable sources told *The Standard* yesterday.

The venue of the signing ceremony will be Shenzhen where the plant's headquarters are located, not Beijing as reported earlier.

The decision on the contract-signing date was made by top Chinese officials working on the project under the leadership of vice-premier Mr Li Peng.

It is understood the Hongkong Government has also been informed of the decision a few days ago.

Sources said all preparations for the mam-

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moth project have been completed, and the infrastructure is ready for the works to start once the green light is given after the signing of the formal contracts with both French and British suppliers.

A source told *The Standard* that Shenzhen was chosen as the venue for signing the contract because most of the negotiations for the project took place there, though the signing of the letters of intent was held in Beijing.

However, it is not yet known who will take part in signing the formal contracts.

The indications are that the chairman of the Guangdong Nuclear Power Joint Venture Company, Mr

Wang Quanguo, will probably represent the Chinese side to sign the multi-billion dollar project.

According to a classified company document seen by *The Standard*, it is planned to take 78 months to construct the plant after formal contracts are signed on the supply of the nuclear facilities.

Site formation and other infrastructure facilities including a road network and reservoirs have been completed.

"The official stand on the construction is to strive to finish the construction in six years, but it must not be more than seven years," the document read.

Meanwhile, the full report of the Legco fact-finding missions to nuclear plants in the United States, Europe and Japan will be made public today.

Councillors will be receiving a copy each in the morning while copies will be made available to the press in the afternoon together with a statement issued by members who have joined the tours.

The scheduled publication of the report will pave the way for the next Wednesday's extraordinary in-house meeting of the Legco members who will probably have a heated debate on whether the council should call for a special open session to discuss the issue. (See accompanying report).

The legislature is at present in summer recess.

There has been angry exchanges between two camps. Those with reservations on Daya Bay have identified themselves with firm opponents of the project, Mr Martin Lee and Dr Conrad Lam.

Their target has been to press for the quick release of the reports of the Legco nuclear fact-finding missions abroad.

And in doing so, the two, especially Mr Martin Lee have had heated exchanges with mission leaders Allen Lee and Maria Tam.