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<p> <p>ISLAMABAD: The International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID) has given a go-ahead to the Balochistan government and prominent nuclear scientist Dr Samar Mubarakmand to carry out the mining and smelting project in Reko Diq area.</p> <p>◆</p> <p>The Advocate General of Balochistan, Amanullah Kinrani, told reporters outside the Supreme Court building on Friday that the ICSID tribunal, which had reserved its ruling on Nov 6, released a 45-page unanimous decision allowing the provincial government to carry out the mining activity. </p> <p>◆</p>

<p>The tribunal was seized with a dispute between Pakistan and Tethyan Copper Company-Austria (TCC) after the latter's application was rejected by the mining authority of Balochistan on the grounds that the company had submitted feasibility reports of only six kilometres area comprising two deposits, whereas it wanted to acquire 99 kilometres which contained 14 deposits.</p> <p>◆</p> <p>Established under the auspices of the World Bank, the ICSID comprising Dr Klaus Sachs, Dr Stanimir Alexandrov and Lord Hoffman had, however, asked the provincial government to keep it abreast of all activities on a regular basis to be carried out in Reko Diq by Dr Samar and his team, said Kinrani who came to attend the Supreme Court hearing of the mining licence case which could not be taken up because the bench was not complete.</p> <p>{loadposition content_adsense300}</p> <p>The TCC had invoked the jurisdiction of the International Chambers of Commerce (ICC) and the ICSID against the prospective Reko Diq minerals licence. TCC is a Canadian and Chilean consortium of Barrick Gold and Antofagasta Minerals formed to explore gold and copper in Reko Diq, a small desert town in Chagai district of Balochistan that sits over the popular Tethyan copper belt and is known for the world's fifth largest deposit of gold and copper.</p> <p>◆</p>

<p>Advocate Ahmed Bilal Soofi, who represented the federal and Balochistan governments before the ICSID, confirmed to Dawn that he had received the order issued by the tribunal. He said TCC in its application had requested the Balochistan government to stop work in an area spread over 99 square kilometres, including H-4 where Dr Mubarakmand was working.</p>

<p>◆</p> <p>The government in its reply before ICSID had said they were working on H-4 area which was 12km away from H-14 and H-15 for which TCC had submitted feasibility reports.</p>

<p>◆</p> <p>Dr Mubarakmand had also appeared before the tribunal in London to explain technical details about his project. He said early development of H-4 deposits was in the interest of the people of Balochistan and Pakistan. Legal arguments on behalf of Pakistan were advanced by Ahmer Bilal Soofi, Arthur Marriott QC, Ms Mahnaz Malik, John Kingston and Ms Cherie Blair.</p> </p> <p>◆</p> <p>Courtesy: ◆Dawn</p>