

SC pulls up govt: 'Illegal drug trials playing havoc'

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The Supreme Court on Thursday pulled up the Centre for allowing uncontrolled clinical drug trials on humans to be conducted by multinational companies, saying it was creating "havoc" across the country. Criticising the government for having gone into "deep slumber" on the issue, and not put in place proper mechanisms to stop the "rackets" by multinationals, which had caused deaths.

A bench of Justices R.M. Lodha and A.R. Dave, in an interim order, ruled that all clinical trials will

Top court directs Centre's health secretary to vet clinical drug trials

have to be done under the supervision of the Union health secretary.

"You have to protect the health of citizens... It is your obligation. Deaths must be arrested and illegal trials stayed," the bench said, directing the government to handle the "menace" urgently.

When it was pointed out that several committees had been appointed to examine the issue and their suggestions were

awaited, the bench responded sharply: "You can get back to the court, but what about those who are losing their lives in such clinical trials. People who lost their lives can't get their lives back," the bench said.

"It is very easy to form a committee or a commission. It is done just to divert the people's attention on the issue. It is the best way to divert attention on important issues," the judges observed.

The court said that the government was "shying away" from responding to its queries, and noted that the affidavit filed by the Centre was not in consonance with its earlier order.

Regulatory