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Covid-19

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# Over 94% of ICU beds occupied

Of the total 6,102 beds available in hospitals in the city, 4,475 were occupied

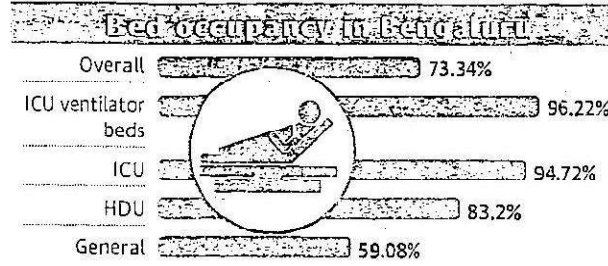
TANU KULKARNI  
BENGALURU

As the number of cases being reported daily continues to rise, 94.72% of the intensive care unit (ICU) beds in hospitals in Bengaluru that were reserved for COVID-19 positive patients have been filled, as on Sunday evening.

Data provided by the Department of Health and Family Welfare as of 6 p.m. stated that 323 of the 341 ICU beds in the city were occupied. Of the total 6,102 beds available in hospitals in the city, 4,475 were occupied. This means that 73.34% of the beds reserved for COVID-19 patients are occupied. This included beds from government medical colleges, government hospitals, private medical colleges and private hospitals.

As many as 96.22% of the ICU beds with ventilators and 83.2% of the High Dependency Unit beds in the city are occupied, while the percentage of general beds occupied is 59.08%.

The highest occupancy of beds - 92.12% - is in government medical colleges in the



Data as of 6 p.m. on Sunday

city, while the least occupancy is in private medical colleges, where 68.08% of the beds are occupied.

Several family members and friends of patients who tested positive for COVID-19 were desperately posting pleas on social media asking if anyone could help them secure hospital beds.

**'Response is not good'**  
Speaking after inspecting SAKRA hospitals, K. Sudhakar, Health and Family Welfare and Medical Education Minister, said, "We will ramp up beds based on the prevailing situation. Private hospitals must join hands with the government in this fight against the pandemic." He also pointed out that the res-

ponse of private hospitals for reserving 50% beds for COVID-19 patients has not been satisfactory and government may have to initiate legal action against those failed to comply with the orders.

The Minister said that Manipal Hospitals have not provided 50% of the beds for COVID-19 patients and strict instructions have been issued to the hospital. He also said that an increase in beds and other temporary arrangements in hotels are being made. According to the department's database, there are currently two government COVID-19 care centres, and 83.56% of the 578 beds were full in these centres.

Health experts point out that there is a need to ensure

that persons who test positive for COVID-19 and are asymptomatic or have mild symptoms should not be admitted to hospitals. Noted epidemiologist and member of State COVID-19 Technical Advisory Committee Giridhar R. Babu said, "Governments need to issue strict orders banning admission of asymptomatic or persons with mild symptoms in all hospitals. This is preventing the admission of people who need oxygenated beds."

**'Can't tell patients to go'**  
H.M. Prasanna, president, Private Hospitals and Nursing Homes Association, said that they could not ask patients to vacate beds. "The Minister needs to understand that there is shortage of beds. We are not denying treatment. The government, instead of solving the problem and appointing Arogya Mitras in each hospital, is blaming us," he said.

Dr. Sudhakar said that if private hospitals did not provide 50% of beds under government quota, their licences would be revoked.