

## **MLA alleges deliberate suppression of COVID-19 data**

Reiterating his allegation of deliberate suppression of COVID-19 data, DMK MLA P.T.R. Palanivel Thiagarajan said district-wise data on number of tests, beds, positivity and discharges would prove the daily State media bulletins false.

“By providing inadequate, inconsistent and reduced data, the State government acts in a irresponsible manner and is betraying the people,” Mr. Thiagarajan told the media here on Wednesday. Stating that, world-wide, average daily deaths in any State and district will increase during the pandemic, he wondered how the numbers in Tamil Nadu shrink.

“The State government is fudging the numbers as data collated from crematoriums in Madurai shows the deaths are much higher than official figures. The Health Minister proudly says there is 70% discharge of COVID-19 patients in the State, while the world-wide recovery rate is 95%,” he said.

He also flayed the State Government’s reasoning for inclusion of 444 deaths to COVID-19 fatalities recently. “If the inclusion was due to May 8 guidelines of Indian Council of Medical Research, why was there an inordinate delay in implementing the guidelines till June 29,” he said.

Mr. Thiagarajan, who himself is a data analyst, said that the huge variation in the positivity rate in a short span of time in different districts could not be relied upon at all.

“While the government claims that spike in number of positive cases was due to increased number of testing, how is that the positivity rate increases manifold with increased number of tests. Then, why does the government reduce the number of testing from 63,000 a day to 52,000. This data is inexplicable and has no logic,” he said.

Only a fair and district-wise data on testing, positivity and deaths will help people to understand the gravity of the pandemic situation and take due precautionary measures.

“Playing politics with data is only suicidal and will in no way prevent the spread of infection,” he added.

The MLA has filed a public interest litigation petition with the Madras High Court seeking district-wise COVID-19 data.

Mr. Thiagarajan was also sceptical about sudden dip in number of positive cases (40) reported in Madurai district on Tuesday ahead of Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami's visit on Thursday.