

It was at 9.30 p.m. on September 22, 2016, that then Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa called out for help. According to her aide V.K. Sasikala, Jayalalithaa had indicated she was unwell while she was in the bathroom situated on the first floor of her Poes Garden residence, after having brushed her teeth.

In an affidavit filed before the Justice A. Arumughaswamy Commission (probing Jayalalithaa's death), Sasikala provides an account of what transpired at Jayalalithaa's residence before she was rushed to hospital. She says she helped the former Chief Minister to her bed, where she "fainted".

Shortly afterwards, K.S. Sivakumar, Sasikala's relative and a doctor, entered the room. Two personal security officers and a driver were called immediately.

Ambulances despatched

According to sources privy to the 55-page, 99-paragraph affidavit filed on March 12, Dr. Sivakumar phoned Vijay Kumar Reddy, husband of Apollo Hospitals' vice-chairperson Preetha Reddy. Two ambulances were despatched from Apollo's Greames Road and Teynampet hospitals, which reached the residence in 10 or 15 minutes. The Apollo team brought an unconscious Jayalalithaa down from her bedroom on a stretcher. The police control room was informed and roads cleared of traffic.

Sasikala has declared that Jayalalithaa regained consciousness in the ambulance and asked where they were taking her. She was told they were en route to the hospital. Earlier in the day, Dr. Sivakumar had examined Jayalalithaa twice. Significantly, Sasikala has said she suggested a visit to the hospital on that very day, but Jayalalithaa had refused to go.

Her fever subsided later, the affidavit says. Sasikala claims that Jayalalithaa's health issues were mainly due to the stress caused by her conviction (and imprisonment) in the disproportionate assets case in September 2014.

The mental stress adversely affected her health, she says. Jayalalithaa had chosen to contest from the R.K. Nagar constituency in Chennai only because her mobility had been affected greatly due to high levels of blood sugar, the affidavit states.

According to Sasikala, Jayalalithaa's health deteriorated significantly in the first week of September 2016, partly because of fluctuating sugar levels.

Two doctors, a diabetologist and a dermatologist, were consulted and they prescribed low dosage steroid tablets.

She recovered but had a fever starting September 19. She attended her last public event on September 21.

Sasikala has given the Commission a list of 20 doctors who had treated Jayalalithaa between November 2014 and September 2016. They work in different private hospitals in Chennai, Mumbai and Kolkata.

A member of Sasikala's legal team told The Hindu that they wanted these doctors to testify before the Commission.