

AL not inviting any foreigners, curtailing pomp and grandeur

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The Daily Morning Voice Online Desk: Ruling Awami League has decided to maintain austerity in the party's 22nd national conference, which is set to be held amid ongoing global economic crisis. For this the party has decided that there will be no lighting and other decorations. The party sources also said no foreign guests except foreign ambassadors will be invited this time. Besides, the top leaders of opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and other parties will also be invited.

A sub-committee on reception affairs, led by presidium member Sheikh Fazlul Karim Selim, held several meetings regarding holding the party's national conference. Member secretary of the sub-committee is education minister Dipu Moni, also the party's joint general secretary. The national conference will be held at historic Suhrawardy Udyan on 24 December. The party sources also said around 15,000 councilors and representatives will be invited from across the country for the council. Outsidings of this, politicians, cabinet members, MPs, civil society members, professionals and foreign diplomats will also be invited. It planned to organise lunch for 50,000 people. Interest leaders and activists will also turn up at the council, the party policymakers assume.

Reception affairs' sub-committee member secretary Dipu Moni said no foreign guests except the ambassadors will be invited at the council. All the political parties including the BNP will be invited. She further said the distribution of invitation letters has already started and it will end by 22 December. Awami League did not invite the foreign guests in its last national council either. In 2016, around 55 guests of 11 countries from India, China, the UK, Canada and Australia attended the AL council. Most of the envoys will be on leave due to the Christmas. As a result, their participation will decrease, the AL leaders think. Most of the AL councils were for two days, but this time it will be for a day. The last council was held on 20-21 December, 2019 and the budget was Tk 34.3 million. The AL national committee has approved a budget of Tk 31.3 million for the impending council.

The AL leaders said there will be no lighting and no large gates like the previous times. The AL council will be held on the stage at Suhrawardy Udyan where the councils of the party's associate bodies held. The stage, however, will be renewed at the shape of a boat, the electoral symbol of Awami League. AL joint general secretary AFM Bahauddin Nasim said, "Considering the ongoing global economic crisis, party president and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has asked to exclude all kinds of pomp and fanfare in the conference. So there will be no lighting."

Awami League came into being at Rose Garden in Dhaka on 23 June, 1949. In its 21st council in 2019, Sheikh Hasina was reelected the president while Obaidul Quader the general secretary. The party leaders have been discussing about the general secretary post as they are sure that Sheikh Hasina will remain the party president.