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## Tarique seeks vote for 'yes' in referendum

He makes the call publicly for the first time

SAJJAD HOSSAIN from Bogura

BNP Chairman Tarique Rahman yesterday, for the first time, publicly sought votes in support of "yes" in the referendum.

"I request all of you that just as you will put the seal on the sheaf of paddy [BNP's electoral symbol] on February 12, at the same time, on the second ballot paper you will be given, please give your verdict in favour of 'yes,'" the BNP chief told an election rally at Collectorate Eidgah ground in Rangpur yesterday night.

"On the election day, when you go to make your plans successful, you have to do one more thing at the same time. Abu Sayed gave his life to bring back rights. Wasim



Tarique Rahman addressing a roadside rally in Bogura's Shibganj yesterday afternoon.  
PHOTO: BNP MEDIA CELL

in Chattogram also gave his life. There are thousands like them who sacrificed their lives for people's voting rights, the right to speak, and economic rights. To properly honour these sacrifices, we must also respect the July charter that we signed."

He added that about two and a half years ago, when the

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Once a vibrant lifeline, the Buriganga is now on the brink of death from relentless pollution. Industrial effluents, tannery waste, sewage, and household garbage have turned the river tar-like and foul-smelling, posing a grave threat to aquatic life. The photo was taken recently.

PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

## 'Voting age 16, one crore jobs'

NCP pledges in its 36-point manifesto

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The National Citizen Party (NCP), a member of the 11-party alliance, has unveiled a 36-point manifesto ahead of the 13th national election, pledging to lower the voting age to 16 and create one crore jobs over the next five years.

The manifesto, titled "Declaration of Youth and Dignity", was announced yesterday afternoon at the Lakeshore Grand Hotel in Gulshan, Dhaka.

Convener Nahid Islam and Spokesperson Asif Mahmud Shojib Bhuyain were present at the ceremony along with other party leaders and dignitaries.

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## People will show 'red card' to 'rotten politics'

Says Jamaat chief; vows to promote merit over heredity

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

People will show "red card" in the upcoming elections to those engaged in the "rotten politics" of the past, which fostered fascism and turned the country into a hub of corruption, Jamaat-e-Islami Ameer Shahiqur Rahman said yesterday.

He also pledged to end the culture

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12 DAYS TO VOTE

## Only 78 women in polls, a third with family link

MOHIUDDIN ALAMGIR and DIPAN NANDY

At least 78 women are participating in this year's parliamentary elections, a record number in a competitive contest, but experts say this only underscores how far the country still lags in ensuring gender parity in politics. Moreover, nearly a third of them are not independent political actors, but relatives of influential men -- wives, daughters or family members of party leaders and power brokers.

Candidacies are spread across just 67 constituencies, leaving more than two-thirds of seats with no scope for directly elected female representation.

While women make up half the population, they account for only 3.93 percent of the 1,981 candidates in the race, a margin many observers describe as tokenistic and largely dynastic.

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- ⌚ 30 parties field no women
- ⌚ No female candidate in over two-thirds of seats
- ⌚ Family ties boost electoral chances, data shows



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