

May Day Observation

Date: 1st May, 2025



Introduction:

May Day has been celebrated on May 1st of each year since its first inception. This day is also known as “International Workers’ Day,” symbolizing the workers’ unity, resilience, and the ongoing struggle for dignity and justice at the workplace. Bangladesh Center for Workers’ Solidarity (BCWS) celebrated this day each year to honor & recognize the efforts & sacrifices of workers fighting around the world who continue to fight for fair treatment, decent working conditions, and equal rights. This year, the Bangladesh Center for Workers’ Solidarity observed this day by joining shoulder to with RMG workers at Rampura, Ashulia, Narayanganj, Gazipur, and Chittagong.

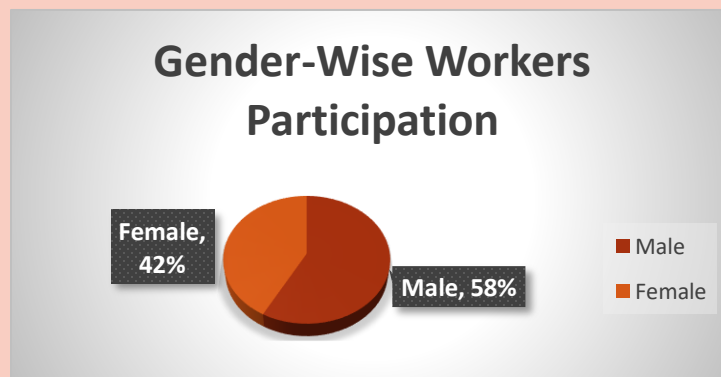
In observance of this important day, Bangladesh Center for Workers’ Solidarity (BCWS) organized a series of events and advocacy activities to honor workers’ contributions and amplify their voices. This report outlines an overview of the events, campaigns, and initiatives undertaken—rally & human chain demonstration, highlighting participation, and the collective voice of solidarity that marked May Day.

This year, the May Day theme of BCWS was-

“Automation Era! Embed Social & Climate Justice, Living Wage, Equality and Decent Work by Fostering Unity Among Workers and Employers.”

Participants:

To celebrate the May Day about 1442 (M-836, F-606) workers, worker leaders and union representatives joined together along with Bangladesh Center for Workers’ Solidarity (BCWS).



Description of May Day Event:

Bangladesh Center for Workers' Solidarity (BCWS) had undertaken digital campaign, human chain demonstration and rally to uphold workers voices.

A. Human Chain Demonstration & Rally:

All centers of Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity (BCWS) -Rampura, Ashulia, Gazipur, Narayanganj, and Chittagong planned to do the human chain demonstration and rally as early as possible due to excessive heatwaves. The rally went forth with a variety of vibrant banners and powerful slogans that expressed the demands and inner voices of the workers. The slogans included-

- “Improve workers’ skills, establish Just Transition.”
- “Efficient & inclusive development, enhances sustainable industrialization.”
- “Implement of bargaining power, improvement of owner-worker relationship.”
- “Formation of a dignified national minimum wage and a living wage policy.”
- “Ensure social safety.”
- “Ensure justice by provision of alternative dispute resolution.”
- “Equal participation of women in decision making.”
- “Ensure maternity leave of six months and paternity leave of two weeks.”
- “Ratify ILO C 189 & 190”
- “Brands should sign the international accord.”
- “Ensure justice and health at work in a changing climate.”
- “RSC works need to be visible and effective for the RMG workers.”

During the event, workers shouted slogans to highlight their needs both inside and outside the workplace. Speeches were provided by worker leaders in the demonstration and clear demands were stated from them included –

- ✓ Embed living standard wage for all garment factory workers.
- ✓ Amend Bangladesh Labor Law enforcing employment injury scheme, repel workplace harassment in accordance with ILO Convention 121, 189 & 190.
- ✓ Accelerate labor court works through establishing alternative dispute resolution (ADR).
- ✓ Brands must be hold accountable to ensure labor rights, climate justice, living wage, FoA.
- ✓ Functionalize anti-harassment cells and day care facilities.
- ✓ Ensure 6 months maternity leave & 2 weeks paternal leave.
- ✓ Safeguard Rights to worker organizing; stop union busting & workers’ blacklisting.



- ✓ Strengthen workers' voice on just transition.
- ✓ Ensure equal participation of women in decision-making process

(Besides, industrial police, SB, DGFI, NSI, local media and local police administration were present so that the vehicles, passers-by and others work could not get hampered by the day observation.)

B. Voices of Workers:

"We want the establishment of day care facility in each factory so that we can work without tension that will reflect in production."

~ By Runa (Garment Worker)

"We demand for living wage. Without living wage, we won't survive. The brands, factory owners and even the country gets benefits from our hardship, yet we are fighting for living wages."

~ By Dulal (Garment Worker)

"Female workers are the main target of physical and verbal harassment. As the majority of the workers are women in RMG sector, it needs to be established women friendly workplace by taking actions against harassment and violences."

~ By Minara (Garment Worker)

C. Leaflet Publication:

Bangladesh Center for Workers Solidarity (BCWS) issued an official statement emphasizing the theme: "Automation Era! Embed Social & Climate Justice, Living Wage, Equality and Decent Work by Fostering Unity Among Workers and Employers." This leaflet reflects the historical significance of May 1st and connected it to the current labor context in Bangladesh, particularly in the garment sector. It outlined several urgent demands, including the ratification of ILO Convention 189 & 190, policy formulation for dignified national minimum wage determination, formulation of permanent labor commission, ensure workers social safety, extend the maternity leave to six months & paternity leave to two weeks, the right to freedom of association, the establishment of effective day care & Anti-harassment Committee (AHC) and the establishment of an effective Employment Injury Scheme (EIS). The statement was disseminated to



stakeholders and the social media as part of the broader advocacy campaign around International Workers' Day.

D. Newsletter Publication:

As part of our May Day 2025 celebration, Bangladesh Center for Workers' Solidarity (BCWS) developed and published a newsletter to highlight the significance of International Workers' Day and amplify the voices of garment workers. The newsletter featured historical context, activities of Bangladesh Centre for Workers Solidarity (BCWS), and key recommendations to improve workers' rights and welfare. It served as an advocacy tool to raise awareness among workers, employers, and policymakers about the pressing labor issues in Bangladesh. The publication also included reflections from women leaders, demands for decent work, and a call to action for systemic change in the garment sector such as; accelerate labor court works through establishing alternative dispute resolution (ADR), safeguard rights to worker organizing, stop union busting & workers' blacklisting, equal participation of women in decision-making, ratify ILO C 189 & 190, and ensure maternity leave of six months & paternity leave of two weeks.



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Snapshots of the event





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