

Hezbut Tawheed Discussion Meeting Marking International Workers' Day

Islam Alone Can Ensure Workers' Rights, Says Imam Selim

Quote: *“Our misfortune is that instead of the sublime ideology of Islam, we are seeking liberation and rights within failed systems like democracy and socialism created by humans.”*

By: Obaidul Haque Badal

Imam Hossain Mohammad Selim, the top leader of Hezbut Tawheed, has stated that only true Islam can ensure the rightful rights of workers.

He made this remark at a conference organized by Hezbut Tawheed Dhaka Metropolitan on the occasion of International Workers' Day. The event was held on Friday (May 1, 2026) in the capital at the Institution of Diploma Engineers (IDEB), where workers from various professions were present.

Describing the present era as a “digital slavery age,” he said that in ancient times slaves were chained like animals, beaten like cattle, and sold in markets. Today, the term “slave” is no longer used. Instead, it has been replaced by words like “worker,” “employee,” and “contract-based staff.” However, although the terminology has changed, the essence of slavery still remains. Only the form of oppression has changed.

He further said that modern digital slavery is simply a modified version of earlier forms of bondage. In reality, today's exploitation is more organized and sophisticated than before. By abandoning the economic system given by Allah, humanity has entered a capitalist structure created by the West, where profit is placed above everything. In this system, workers are treated like machines of production, not human beings. They are reduced to numbers in an Excel sheet rather than being part of a human relationship.

Referring to Islamic history, he said that the era of “Jahiliyyah” was an age of slavery where slaves had no rights and were treated as property. The Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) devoted his life to abolishing this system of slavery. He set unmatched examples in history, including freeing Zayd ibn Harithah (RA) and declaring him as his adopted son. He also instructed his companions: *“Do not call them slaves; rather call them my sons and daughters.”*

Highlighting the rights of workers in Islam, Imam Selim said the Prophet (peace be upon him) instructed that a worker's wages must be paid before their sweat dries. He warned: *“I will be a plaintiff against the one who hires a worker and does not pay his due wages after his work is completed.”* He not only advised but established a divine system that eliminated economic inequality and restored justice for the oppressed.

He further said that the Prophet (peace be upon him) abolished social discrimination and elevated Bilal (RA), a formerly enslaved person, to the position of calling the Adhan at the Kaaba, sending a powerful message that humanity and dignity are above all.

Comparing Islamic labor principles with the current system, he said that in today's world, workers are often forced to work for months on half or no wages. Many cannot meet even their basic needs and are forced into inhumane conditions. They frequently have to take to the streets demanding wages and face police violence. The practice of workers protesting before Eid for salaries and bonuses has become a regular phenomenon.

He added that although various ideologies, including Marxism, have been introduced worldwide with slogans like "Workers of the world, unite," they have failed to improve the condition of workers. Instead, workers are becoming more deprived and trapped in increasingly complex systems of exploitation.

Expressing regret, he said: *"Our misfortune is that instead of the sublime ideology of Islam, we are seeking liberation and rights within failed systems like democracy and socialism created by humans."*

He then presented the framework of a Tawheed-based Islamic state system, stating that it would eliminate forced labor, ensure fair wages based on effort, and guarantee physical, mental, and financial security for workers. This would enable them to live with dignity. No worker would lose their life to police bullets for demanding rights under such a system.

He also presented several proposals to the government for ensuring workers' rights, summarized as follows:

- Establish a central database including all categories of workers to ensure legal protection under labor laws.
- Ensure healthcare, education, and other basic services for workers' families.
- Guarantee full rights, freedom, and dignity for domestic workers.
- Ensure transparency in wages and eliminate discrimination in salary structures.
- Ensure physical and mental safety in workplaces.
- Ensure security, equal opportunities, and equal wages for female workers.
- Establish training centers and workshops for skill development.
- Define working hours and holidays and ensure additional benefits for overtime work.
- Establish labor courts to provide legal assistance to workers.

Earlier, the program began with a welcome speech by the chair of the event, Joint General Secretary Dr. Mahbub Alam Mahfuz. Other speakers included organization adviser Khadija Khatun, Joint General Secretary and Head of Women's Wing Rufaidah Panni, Joint General Secretary SM Samsul Huda, Dhaka Metropolitan General Secretary Farid Uddin Rabbani, Joint Women Secretary Ayesha Siddika, and Dhaka Division Women Secretary Taslima Islam, among others.