

**Speech by the Hon'ble Chief Justice of Bangladesh
Dr. Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed
27th Judicial Administration Training Course Certificate Awarding
Ceremony
Judicial Administration Training Institute, Dhaka
13 August 2025**

**Justice Md. Emdadul Huq, Director General of the Judicial Administration
Training Institute,**

**Hon'ble Judges of the Appellate Division and High Court Division of the
Supreme Court,**

Distinguished District and Sessions Judges

Faculties,

Colleagues, friends, and honoured guests,

Good evening.

We gather here tonight not merely to award certificates, but to acknowledge a shared calling. The completion of the 27th Judicial Administration Training Course marks an achievement for each of you individually, but it is also a moment of collective significance for the judiciary as a whole. It is another link in the long chain of guardians who must preserve both the majesty and the humanity of justice in our Nation.

Dear Participants,

Since assuming office, I have spoken of our reform roadmap, a deliberate, structured plan to strengthen the independence and efficiency of our judiciary. But

no roadmap, however sound, can walk itself into reality. Reform must be inhabited by those who will live it. It depends not on declarations from above, but on the dedication of those who preside in our courts each day. The truest custodians of judicial reform are not the ones who announce it, they are the ones who make it visible in action, credible in conduct, and durable in results.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Reform is not simply the introduction of new rules or structures; it is first an inward discipline. It begins with the question, Am I delivering justice with the speed, clarity, and fairness that my people deserve? Do my courtrooms function as forums for resolution rather than halls for performance? Do I demand of myself the same diligence, punctuality, and decorum that I expect from those who appear before me? Without that personal introspection, without a readiness to be judged by our own standards, we risk leaving reform as a hollow word.

Judicial independence, too, must be understood in this spirit. It is not a privilege to be hoarded; it is a responsibility to be honoured. The judiciary is, and must be recognised as, a coequal organ of the State. Our independence must be secured not through ceremonial assurances, but through the firm architecture of our institutions, administrative sovereignty, financial autonomy, and a Supreme Court Secretariat managing our own affairs free from the invisible tether of executive control. Yet let us not mistake independence for isolation. The strongest judiciaries are those that guard their autonomy while maintaining respectful, transparent engagement with the other organs of State. The UK Constitutional Reform Act 2005 is instructive here, it strengthened judicial independence while preserving essential channels of dialogue. True separation of powers does not demand

estrangement, it demands mutual respect and a shared understanding of constitutional purpose.

Dear Judges,

This vision of reform calls for something beyond technical competence; it calls for judicial statesmanship. Statesmanship is the capacity to decide cases not only with fidelity to principle, but with an awareness of how those decisions will shape the nation's values and sustain its social fabric. It is the art of expressing society's highest ideals as they evolve, while maintaining solidarity amidst reasonable but irreconcilable differences. The judicial statesman does not press a partisan advantage to its bitter end. He or she seeks solutions that preserve the unity of the legal order and affirm the dignity of all sides, without sacrificing the authority of law.

Our own history teaches us both the power and the perils of this role. There have been moments when the judiciary has been the only fully functioning organ of the State, standing as the last guardian of the Constitution. That legacy is a source of pride, but it is also a warning, when the judiciary falters, through complacency within or compromise from without, the entire constitutional structure is imperilled. The measure of our statesmanship lies in our ability to protect the court's legitimacy by delivering justice that is principled yet sensitive to its reception, that is decisive yet mindful of its long-term consequences.

You, as District and Metropolitan Sessions Judges, are the first face of justice for most of our citizens. You shape the culture of your courts. You influence the standards of your local Bar. You decide whether justice in your jurisdiction will be swift or sluggish, accessible or remote. The reform we have embarked upon will succeed or fail in large measure because of the choices you make when you leave this hall. Your leadership must be defined by the courage to adapt without surrendering principle, the ability to decide without arrogance, and the commitment to reform without losing sight of the human beings whom the law exists to serve.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have spoken elsewhere that the judiciary is not an island, remote, insular, and aloof, but a pillar, strong, visible, accountable, and firmly connected to the constitutional architecture of the State. Our authority rests not on the fear we command, but on the trust we inspire. That trust is built case by case, decision by decision, and through the daily discipline of our courts. It is sustained when we balance independence with engagement, principle with empathy, and courage with restraint.

The certificate you receive today is not an ornament; it is an obligation. It signals not the end of your training, but the renewal of your public commission, to reform with sincerity, to judge with integrity, and to serve with humility. Let the people of Bangladesh remember you not for the power you hold, but for the justice you deliver. If we can reform ourselves with the same resolve that we reform our institutions, we will have honoured the trust placed in us, and we will leave this judiciary stronger, fairer, and more enduring than we found it.

Thank you.