

Speech of Hon'ble Chief Justice of Bangladesh Dr. Justice Syed Refaat Ahmed on the Launching Ceremony of the CPD Programme for Advocates and Digital BLD of Bangladesh Bar Council

Venue: Supreme Court Auditorium, Date: 24/11/2025

Distinguished chair, Learned Attorney General for Bangladesh,

Hon'ble Advisers of Interim Government

Respected leaders of the Bar Council,

Senior advocates,

Members of the judiciary,

Members of Print and Electronic Media

Dear participants

Good Afternoon

It is a privilege to join you at the Launching Ceremony of the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme for Advocates and Digital BLD of the Bangladesh Bar Council which reflects the breadth of participation from senior members of the legal community and from relevant ministries, highlighting the importance of this occasion for the future of the legal profession

Ladies and gentlemen

This launching comes at a moment when Bangladesh's legal and constitutional institutions are undergoing purposeful transformation. Around the world, the legal profession is changing rapidly due to digital transitions, cross-border economic activity, data-driven governance, new forms of evidence, and the growing centrality of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in legal analysis. In Bangladesh too, we must now recognise that the traditional models of legal practice, training, and courtroom engagement are no longer adequate for a justice system that seeks to be modern, efficient, people-centric, and globally competitive. Today's CPD initiative therefore represents more than a new programme, it represents a strategic re-orientation of the legal profession toward continuous learning, digital readiness, ethical competence, and domain-specific expertise.

In the judiciary's own journey of reform over the past sixteen months, we have consistently emphasised institutional strengthening and professional development as the twin foundations of long-term judicial independence.

As part of these institutional reforms, the judiciary has launched a series of operational initiatives that directly strengthen access to justice. These include the Supreme Court helplines, nationwide judicial helpline, pilot paper-free benches at the High Court, the digital grievance platform for citizens, automated cause-lists, and accelerated case management systems in selected districts, paper-free requisition services within Supreme Court and two paper-free family Courts in Dhaka and Chattogram. The recently concluded judicial roadshows conducted across the divisions of Bangladesh have further provided valuable insights into the practical capacities, training needs, and infrastructural challenges faced by our district judiciary. All these initiatives rely fundamentally on the competence, cooperation, and preparedness of the Bar. A reforming judiciary requires a transforming Bar, otherwise the justice system moves asymmetrically and risks imbalance.

This is why today's CPD Programme for Advocates is so timely and so essential. When advocates consistently update their knowledge, the quality of pleadings improves, trials proceed with greater clarity, judicial time is used more efficiently, and the courts' capacity to deliver timely justice expands significantly. A well-trained advocate is not only an asset to the client but a necessary pillar of a functioning judicial system.

The introduction of Digital BLD, takes this ambition a step further by placing learning, records, and accreditation within a unified digital framework. A data-enabled Bar Council able to track training, map competencies, record disciplinary histories, and support research will add stability and transparency to the profession. It also aligns with the broader push toward digitalisation within the judiciary, from e-filing to digitised archives to electronic case tracking. In this sense, the Bar Council's effort today is not separate from the judiciary's reform agenda, it is complementary, reinforcing, and mutually dependent.

Dear Participants,

Beyond national efforts, Bangladesh's justice sector is now engaged in an unprecedented degree of international collaboration. Our partnerships with various development partners have supported digitalisation drives, training modules, gender justice programmes, and

community-based legal empowerment initiatives. At the same time, the judiciary has opened new avenues of cooperation with non-traditional partners such as Brazil, Egypt, Palestine, Nepal, and Thailand. The signing of an MoU with Egypt, and two further MoUs underway with Brazil and Nepal, symbolise a new era of judicial diplomacy. The Differentiated Case Management (DCM) method used in Nepal stands as a practical model of structured case-flow management that Bangladesh can learn from as we expand our own case management reforms.

In this context, the CPD Programme should not be treated as a standalone training exercise but as part of a wider ecosystem of institutional learning. The Bar must now prepare advocates who are capable of operating within specialised courts, particularly in commercial law, environmental law, digital and cyber law, family jurisprudence, and the rapidly emerging domains of climate litigation and international economic law. The Supreme Court's own efforts to pilot commercial courts, strengthen environmental benches, adopt mediation-friendly frameworks, strengthening legal aid services and develop capacity around complex technical disputes all require a Bar that is equally prepared and forward-looking.

Let me therefore congratulate the Bangladesh Bar Council, the programme hosts, the distinguished speakers, and all partner organisations for their determination in bringing this initiative to life. Your work today marks an important evolution in the relationship between the Bar and the Bench, between the legal profession and the justice system, and between our national institutions and global legal currents.

To conclude, I hope that this initiative serves not only as a training platform, but as a foundation for a professionally confident, technologically capable, and ethically grounded legal community. It shall stand as a contribution to the wider journey of judicial reform and constitutional renewal in Bangladesh.

Thank you all.