

## HC summons Open University VC

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THE High Court on Thursday directed the Open University vice-chancellor, two Dhaka University professors and three other writers to appear on March 3 over their writing in two text books that former president Ziaur Rahman had declared the republic's independence on March 26, 1971.

The VC, RIM Aminur Rashid, along with DU political science department professors Harun-or-Rashid and Shawkat Ara Hossain, and three others – Shabiha Sultana, HM Delwar Hossain and Mahfuza Chowdhury – were summoned as they were the writers of the two textbooks of the Open University's Civics (2nd paper) and Sociology (2nd paper) HSC programme published in June 2009.

The court passed the order after the hearing in the rule it had issued on 28 persons, including the five, to explain why books pub-

lished and distributed by Open University should not be declared illegal, and also should not be confiscated.

The 28 persons were also asked to explain why they should not be directed to withdraw the books from the market as soon as possible and to refrain from their further publication and distribution.

The respondents were also required to explain why they should not be prosecuted for treason and other offence under the penal code on charge of distorting the universally recognised and endorsed history that the country was liberated under the leadership of its founding president Sheikh Mujibur Rahman after a successful war of liberation from the Pakistani occupation.

During the hearing the court said that the writers of the books should be hanged for claiming that Ziaur Rahman had proclaimed the country's independence al-

though a High Court bench in a verdict delivered on June 21, 2009 stated that Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had proclaimed the republic's independence on March 26, 1971.

The court issued the rule on May 26, 2010, after hearing a writ petition filed by two Supreme Court lawyers Altaf Uddin Ahmed and Mahmud Hossain challenging the legality of publishing the books.

Belal Hussain Joy represented the petitioners.