Last year was seemingly the year of inconvenient truths; it started with the intergovernmental panel on climate change (IPCC) announcing that climate change was human induced. It may have been said for a long time, but it took equally long to prove it through scientific and empirical research. Along with that throughout the year Al Gore went on his lecture tour as heated debate followed him every step of the way, some said he exaggerated figures while others were questioning the very facts themselves, it is safe to say that no matter what happened, climate change was being talked about and it was at the very tip of our consciousness. Here in Bangladesh we suffered floods which never seemed to let up and there was the devastating cyclone SIDR, the topic of climate change became one we could all empathize with.

Then came the shot in the arm that the issue needed. Al Gore for his work in educating people about climate change and taking the topic from science labs to family rooms was jointly awarded the Nobel Peace Prize along with the IPCC. With that one award everything seemed vindicated, the struggle to fight climate change had gone up in the opinion polls and all of a sudden it was chic to go green.

Atiq.Rahman's journey started very early: "I have been interested in the environment since my childhood, but I guess I never really saw it as an important topic of research and study till the oil crises of the mid and late seventies." Rahman was academically trained as a Chemist and even spent much of the time in his early youth as a journalist; researching facts, finding stories and reporting them, therefore, has been in his blood for a long time. The only thing that changed was his job title and the areas in which he reported, from the politics of '71 to sustainable development in the South, from student uprisings to climate change. In a way he remained true to journalism, never compromising the facts, the research or the findings.

> "They (the floods) were abnormal for a number of reasons the main one being that there was no rain, yet we were still experiencing floods. The connection between man's interference in nature and the environment was becoming clearer to see."

Heroes



Natural disasters will become more common as climate change takes its toll.

On January 28 around the world, newsrooms were buzzing with the announcement of the winners of the Champions of the Earth Award 2008. After previous winners included Massoudeh Ebtekar, the former Vice President of Iran; H.E. Mikhail Gorbachev; H.R.H. Prince Hassan Bin Talal of Jordan; Jacques Rogge and the International Olympic Committee and Al Gore, weeks of speculation as to who would win this year were finally put to rest and five more names were to be added to the illustrious list. Atiq Rahman finally got the recognition he never sought but thoroughly deserved by being named as one of the Champions of the Earth 2008. While it came as no surprise to those who knew his dedication and work it was more than a pleasant surprise for a country which lives off its environment very little regard for protecting it.

Rahman says, "when I started my PhD the environment came into the limelight for the first time, the reason was that the international oil crisis gave way to the discussion of how human resources are used and how to get the best out of them. That was also the time as a scientist that I started to look into low energy issues. Little things