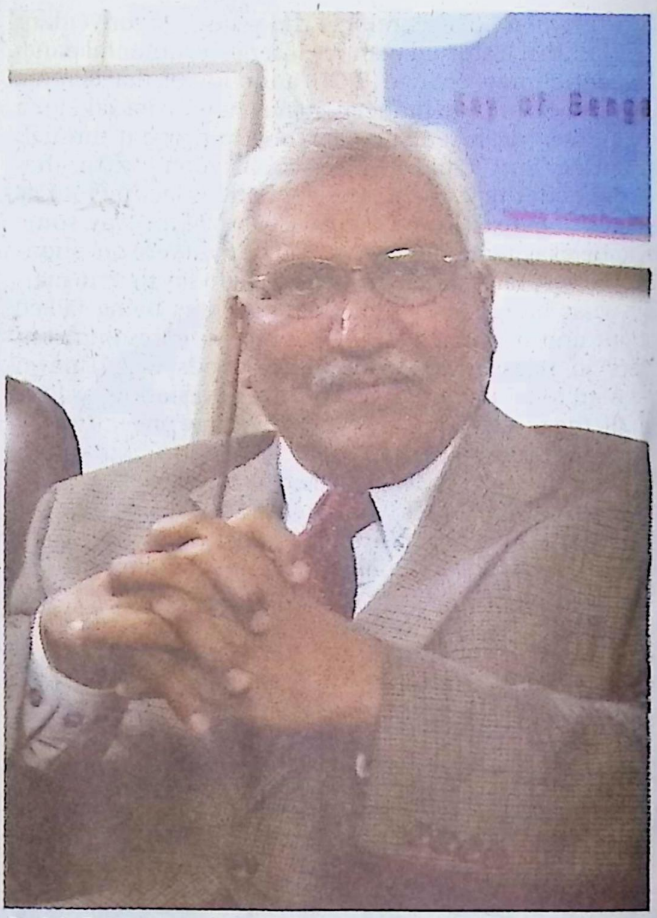
began to emerge and I started to look into how the environment could be brought under the umbrella of development." The issue of development was never far from his mind because no matter where he studied and was based he never lost focus of the problems facing his country. Rahman left Bangladesh in 1974 on a Commonwealth Scholarship to the UK and completed his PhD in solid state chemistry and low energy processes from Brunel University, London. Leaving Bangladesh at such a precarious time for the nation did not sit well with him and thus most of his work since then has been geared to issues relevant to Bangladesh and other developing countries.

It was during those oil crises of the seventies that Rahman began to see the contradiction in western and eastern lives as well as their similarities. "I noticed that there was a huge amount of waste in both the East and the West, and that was when I had a clear idea that we could do a lot more with less." Clearly, there was a link between the issues of waste, resource constraints and integrating the environment into development, all of which Rahman looked into with his research and findings. Over and above all of this he says, "inequality in society, both nationally and internationally was something I could not take, I knew there was work to be done there to bring some level of social parity and that was what I strived for."

After his PhD he taught at Oxford University where as he says, "I met some of the brightest people on the planet and we started working together." It was in the cosmopolitan academic atmosphere of Oxford that he came up with the idea to set up a global institute, an idea he would revisit a few times over the next decade. In 1978 Rahman was a consultant on a project on new and renewable energy in 12 Asian nations that could be cited as the real catalyst for his work in sustainable development. It was also in Oxford that he was developing new materials in low energy materials and was working on the cutting edge of science. Within a few years he did try and set up his global centre, having made contacts around the world. He hoped there would be at least one office in each continent and had grand plans for his institute. As it so happened he was accused of being somewhat of a soldier without a cause. His idea for a centre of excellence on science and technology did not take off. His numerous papers on the subjects were his testament to his cause but as it so happens things did not work out.

Rahman was also one who did not shy away from the problems of societies outside the fields of science; he was the elected Vice President of the Scottish Council for Racial Equality and actively continued anti apartheid work. That was also the era when huge amounts of data were needed for research work and as a person who had lived in a third world country, Rahman realised that most of the time one could not gather large swathes of data for



Dr. Atiq Rahman.

research projects. As that was the case often developing countries were left out of much needed research work in areas vital to their survival. "I developed methodologies to work with low data because I knew in Bangladesh it would be almost impossible to gather the amount of data the average researcher needed." It was at this time through his various research projects that he also came to see as he puts it "the domination of the donors" with regard to the money they (the donors) lend and the work they support. By the mid eighties Bangladesh started to weigh on his mind more and more as he wished to do some work in his motherland. It was a few years after he met Saleemul Huq who was also working in Europe and together they tried to set up an institute in Bangladesh. After initially failing with his global centre in the early eighties he was looking forward to trying again this time in Bangladesh. He was put in touch with Saleemul Huq who was also working on a similar idea and whom he had already known for a number of years.

Saleemul Huq, Atiq Rahman along with Moyeen Khan and Syed Iqbal Ali then started up the Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies (BCAS). It was launched through