

Showing an unusual plant species, 8-year-old Subah Salam desperately asks her mother, "What is the name of this tree?" Her mother Shahrina Salam (35) eagerly introduces the *Ulatkambal* plant (one kind of medicinal plant) to her daughter, and shows some interesting looking cactus to her as well.

Tree lovers like Shahrina swarmed the 24th national plant fair titled "*Jatiya Brikkho Mela- 2016*", held at the trade fair field, Agargaon, organised by the Forest Department of the government. This year, the theme of the fair is 'Trees for livelihood, trees for life'.

Like Shahrina, many parents bring their children to the tree fair, and introduce them to the large collection of unknown plants. In fact, it is a haven for the tree and nature aficionados, where they can visit and buy various plants, offered by numerous nurseries of the city. As the fair offers an extensive collection of plants at fairly reasonable price, one can buy his/her desired trees without any hassles.

DIFFERENT SHADES OF GREEN

NILIMA JAHAN

PHOTOS: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO



"Approximately 500 species of local and foreign trees including forests, fruits, flowers, timber, herbal, perennials, shrubs, climbers are being exhibited in this year's fair", says Marufa Akhter, Deputy Conservator of Forests. "Dedicating the fair to the nature enthusiasts, a total of 88 stalls- public, private and non-nursery organisations, participate with different plants and products related to plantation", she adds.

This year, the sale of trees has surpassed that of any previous years. According to many nursery owners, this year the number of people eagerly buying plants has broken all the previous records. Though in prior times, the demand of forest trees was high, over the years, fruits, flowers and ornamental plants have also become popular to the nature lovers. Due to lack of open space, urban people are now showing more interest in rooftop and balcony gardening, and hence they are buying mostly small plants, bonsais, orchids, money plants and cactuses.

"Along with a number of different foreign and indigenous trees, we have a very rare '*Hijol*' tree, and you would not find the second piece of it in this fair", says 40-year-old Md. Harun-Or- Rashid, the owner of the Green Land Nursery. "We have some exclusive bonsais too", adds Rashid. Green Land Nursery has a reputation of owning exclusive plants and saplings. In fact, this nursery was awarded national awards thrice.

If you notice the fruits plants, the tiny fruits-bearing seedlings would attract you the most. Apart from the plenty of local fruits, many foreign fruits plants are also available, which are mostly suitable for the rooftop gardens. Besides, there are also plenty of medicinal plants, for example-*Shatamuli*, *Nyantara*, *Lajjabati*, *Neem*, *Patharkuchi*, *Ulatkambal*, *Nishindha*, *Shwarpagandha* and much more.



Furthermore, some stalls of the fairs offer different agriculture materials, vases, tubs, colourful stones, seeds, fertilisers, latex and many more agro products. Bangladesh Forest Research Institute (BFRI) provides information related to plant forest trees. Different organisations are also there to provide daylong practical training on rooftop and balcony gardening.

Appreciating the initiative of the authorities, the visitors demand such plant fair twice a year. They believe that people would have been interested in buying more if the price were cheaper. The authority should organise this kind of fair more often.

"If we get to see interesting range of plants and know how a plant performs once it's planted in the ground, I

am sure everyone will enjoy planting more trees and this way, we can help increase greenery of our country", believes 26-year-old Habibur Rahman, one of the visitors of the fair.

On the other hand, the nursery owners believe, government subsidy in this sector will encourage them more to come up with this kind of initiative. Being a month long fair, it was supposed to end officially yesterday, but given the increasing demand of the visitors, the organisers have decided to continue it till September 3, 2016.

If you have not visited yet but intend to, make sure to drop by and get yourself and your loved ones a gift that will grow and flourish. ■

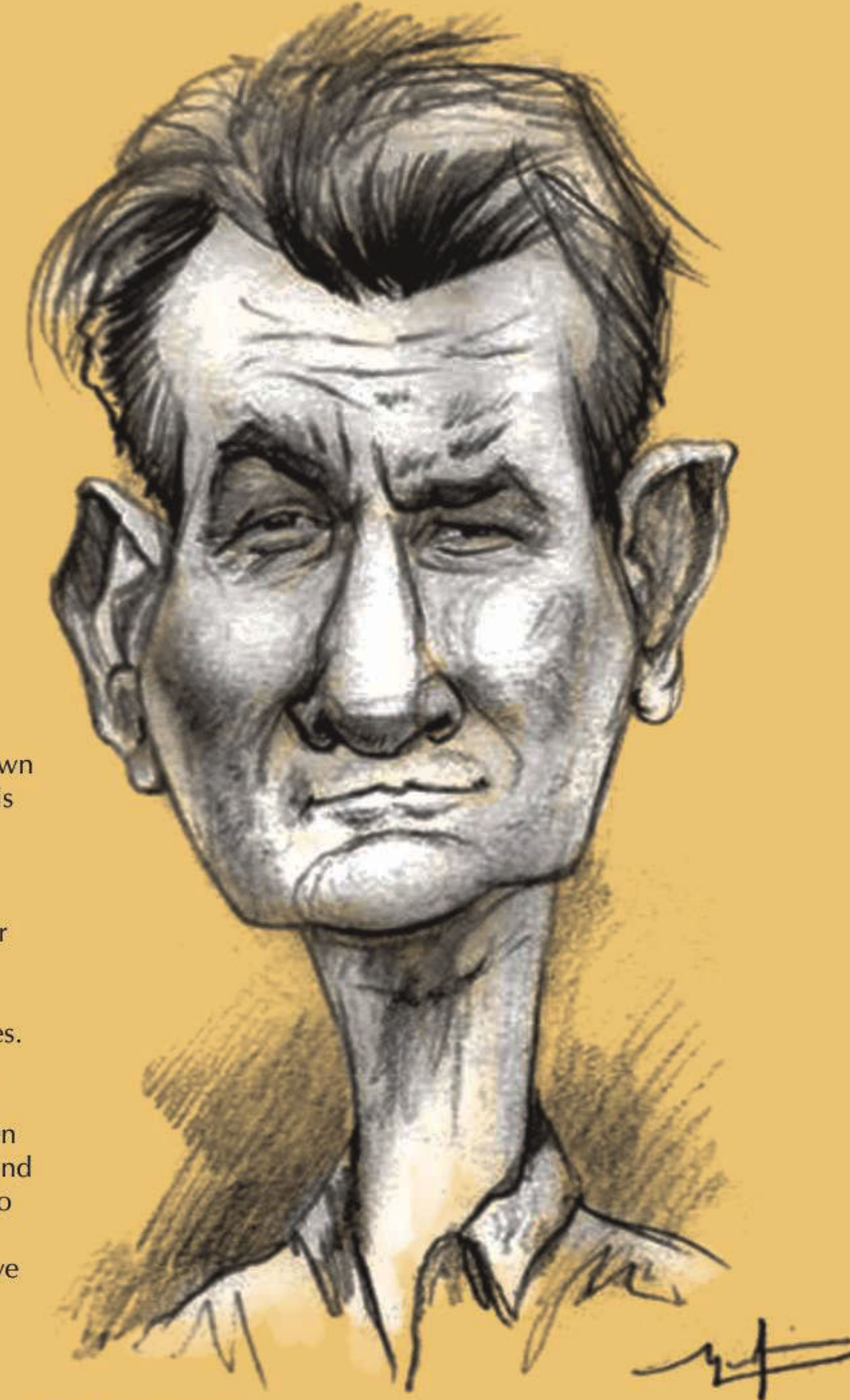
NATURE

MAD GENIUS

CHARLIE SHEEN

(born September 3, 1965),

Carlos Irwin Estévez, popularly known by his stage name Charlie Sheen, is an American actor. Even though Sheen rose to fame after a series of successful films such as *Platoon*, *Wall Street*, *Young Guns*, *Eight Men Out*, *Major League*, *Hot Shots!*, and *The Three Musketeers* (1993), in the 2000s, Sheen became best known for his television roles. He starred in *Two and a Half Men* which earned him several Golden Globe and Emmy Award nominations. In 2010, Sheen was the highest paid actor on television and earned US\$1.8 million per episode of *Two and a Half Men*. I have a different constitution. I have a different brain; I have a different heart; I got tiger blood, man.



SKETCH: YAFIZ SIDDIQUI

“Uncertainty is a sign of humility, and humility is just the ability or the willingness to learn.”

I have one speed, I have one gear: go!

Fame is empowering. My mistake was that I thought I would instinctively know how to handle it. But there's no manual, no training course.”

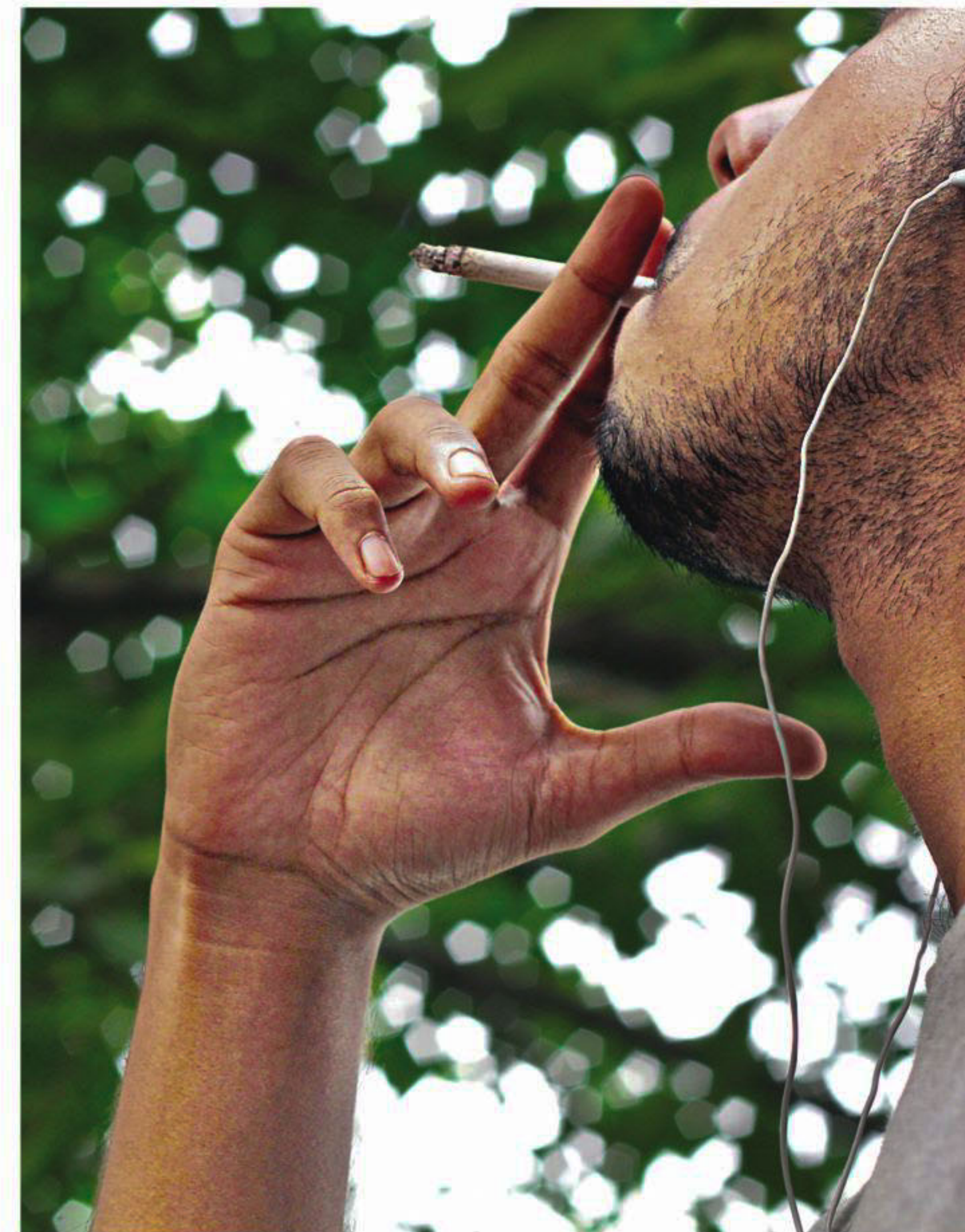
STARDIARY

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GIVING UP NICOTINE

My father is a diabetic patient and was even diagnosed with a heart ailment. He has been a chain smoker and can't give up this habit despite all these medical ailments. My mother has tried many times to persuade him to stop smoking without success. We even held several intervention sessions to tell him how important he is to us and why we want him to give up smoking. But he says that he can't function properly without his cigarettes. Last week one of his childhood friends came to visit him. We learnt from our mother, my father and this friend of his started smoking together during their college days. Two years ago, after being diagnosed with a heart ailment, he had given up smoking and he came to talk to my father about it. He told my father that giving up smoking is not as difficult as he thinks it is. Finally my father is convinced to cut down his consumption. He let his friends and family know that he is giving up smoking. He told us that he needs our support and encouragement to stop. We have happily gotten rid of ashtrays, lighters and all cigarettes.

Anika Noor
Baridhara, Dhaka



A NERVE-WRECKING SITUATION!

I was in my office in Lotus Kamal tower-2, busy doing my usual office work, when suddenly I felt a heavy tremor. At first, I thought somebody pushed me back and forth. But after a while I along with my other colleagues realised that it was an earthquake. Soon after sensing the jolt, panic gripped all of the employees so fiercely that they started screaming and running around. Some of them started looking for a safer place and quickly running downstairs. Half an hour later when I was heading for my classes in Dhaka University, I discovered people still waiting in front of their building with panic in their eyes. When people rush outside they need to keep in mind that most of our buildings are densely built up and are not designed to be earthquake-safe. If we go outside during an earthquake, we can get severely injured, or even buried, by falling debris, if not, by stampede. Earthquake is happening in Dhaka quite frequently, and we should learn why running outdoors during an earthquake is dangerous. Instead of that we can do Drop, Cover, Hold on drill with our families and friends as this is recommended worldwide as the best way to protect yourself. It is true that we can not predict or prevent earthquakes, but we can reduce the possibility of casualties.

Md Zonaid Emran
SEO, Treasury Department, FBL

PHOTO: KAZI TAHSIN AGAZ APURBO