



# Don't

CHINTITO

Jihad was just like any other 4-year old kid; innocent, playful, unsuspecting, and inquisitive. The deep tube-well contractors Dhaka WASA at Shahjahanpur were just like almost any other entity in Bangladesh; arrogantly careless about safety issues, lacking knowledge and skill about their trade, and devoid of any degree of professionalism. "Nothing will happen" seem to be their motto, primarily because their children are nowhere near the open pit, hundreds of feet deep.

Alarm bells did not ring in Bangladesh after more than one incident in neighbouring India of children falling into their death traps. Unwittingly they found themselves at the bottom of a narrow vertical channel. Imagine the shock and fear amid the pain of a child who is in total darkness, in possibly very cold and wet conditions, hungry after a while, calling his mother, father, sleepy... but only as long as the last breath.

As a nation we are pathetically careless, culpable of murder and for inflicting injuries on others due to what we do and we do not. The aura of "damn care" is evident everywhere: at home, at work, at the bazaar, at the playground, on the road, off the road, on the train, boat, with water, with electricity, with fire... We don't give a damn to any safety aspect because we believe that the misfortune will happen to someone else. But, that disaster-struck "someone else" is also a "me", or was.

Sadly, according to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA)-UK, "Childhood injuries are closely linked with social deprivation. Children from poorer backgrounds are five times more likely to die as a result of an accident than children from better off families - and the gap is widening".

We should start a national campaign of "don't" telling us all how we can keep our children and the rest of us safe. Here are some, and you definitely can think of many more:

Don't leave a child unsupervised, never, under no circumstances

Don't allow a child near hot objects, such as iron, pots and pans

Don't allow a child near hot water



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

**Don't let children play on the rooftop with low railings.**

Don't allow a child to be stifled by a blanket or quilt

Don't clutter your staircases or corridors, as a child may trip and fall

Don't allow a child to touch electric switches and sockets

Don't give hard lozenges or chewing gum to a child, who may not be old enough to have them

Don't give coins or marbles or such things to a child, who might put them in the mouth

Don't give toys with small parts to a child who may not understand

Don't keep a bucketful of water wherein a child may fall

Don't keep medicine and household chemicals where children can see or reach them

Don't let a child be endangered by a moving car, especially one that is reversing

- Don't let a child carry a heavy object even in jest
- Don't let a child climb a veranda railing
- Don't let a child handle knives and sharp objects
- Don't let a child near an oven, gas or electric
- Don't let a child play with a long rope or wire
- Don't let a child play with matchsticks
- Don't let a child sit on an adult chair without armrest; get a high chair made for a child
- Don't let a child sit on the back seat of a vehicle except on a designed child seat or a lap
- Don't let a child sit on the front seat of a motor vehicle
- Don't let a child slide down a staircase banister

- Don't ride on a rickshaw with one child on your lap and another sitting beside you; you are holding on to nothing
- Don't sit with a child inside a vehicle when the CNG cylinder is being charged, neither should you
- Don't tell a child to run an errand across a street or any unsafe errand
- Don't let a child walk in shoes without having the shoelaces tied well
- Having said all that, getting hurt and bruised from falling and scraping, being shoved and pushed, are all a part of growing up; and yes, childhood would not be the same without some cuts and welts.



PHOTO: PRABIR DAS

**Protect your children from these deathtraps.**

- Don't let a child wander on to wet floor
- Don't let children fly kite on the rooftop
- Don't let children play on the roof unsupervised by an adult
- Don't let them hang on to and climb window grills, unless the frame is set behind the building aperture and the steel elements are fastened well
- Don't let them have long nails
- Don't lock your child in the house and go out, not even for one minute
- Don't make it easy for a child to open a fridge or a washing machine door
- Don't ride a motorbike with your child

Children should not be shielded in a cocoon, yes, but unnecessary injuries and death can be avoided. Come on, the kid has just been born. Let him see what sort of a world we are leaving behind. And he deserves it safe.

Every child is the father of man. Psychology will teach us that a child should not be frequently admonished with "don't"; rather they should be encouraged to "do". That is why let us keep on telling each other, do keep buildings, open areas, streets and pavements safe.

"Do keep the children safe", for tomorrow they will keep theirs. ■