

## Bridge collapse sends Bangladesh train plunging

Dhaka, Bangladesh

A train plunged into a canal when the bridge it was travelling across gave way, killing four people and injuring 100 more in Bangladesh yesterday.

Officials said part of the bridge collapsed as the express train went over, sending five cars crashing to the ground, with one of them landing in the water.

Scores of people were trapped in the accident at Kalaura, 300 kilometres (185 miles) from Dhaka.

Local people joined fire and police teams in pulling the dead and injured out of the wreckage, Rashidul Hasan, a police superintendent, told AFP.

Regional government administrator Tofael Islam said part of the bridge gave way as the train



Bangladeshi onlookers gather around a derailed train after a bridge collapse in Kalaura

Train plunged into a canal as a bridge collapsed on June 24



was crossing.

Twenty-one of the injured were taken to a hospital in Sylhet, the nearest city, in serious condition.

Train services from Dhaka to the northeast were stopped because of the accident.

## Suspected mastermind of Ethiopia attacks shot dead

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Ethiopian police have shot dead a security chief suspected of orchestrating a deadly bid to overthrow the regional Amhara government, with possible links to the murder of the army chief, state media reported yesterday.

Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed's office had named Amhara security chief Asaminew Tsige as the chief suspect in an "attempted coup" in the region that left its president, top adviser and attorney general dead on Saturday.

## Vietnam jails US citizen for 'state overthrow' attempt

Hanoi, Vietnam

A US citizen was sentenced yesterday to 12 years in Vietnamese prison for "attempting to overthrow the state", a lawyer and state media said, as the one-party country squeezes dissent.

Vietnamese-American Michael Nguyen was detained in July last year while travelling in the country with two activists, who were also arrested.

The trio were accused of setting up a group to prepare armed protest and the occupation of official "headquarters" in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City.

## US President Trump to visit Seoul

Seoul, South Korea

US President Donald Trump will visit South Korea at the weekend after the G20 summit to discuss deadlocked nuclear talks with the North with President Moon Jae-in, Seoul's presidential office said yesterday. Trump will fly to the South Korean capital on Saturday after attending the G20 summit in Japan, officials said.

## Two survivors pulled from collapsed Cambodia building

Sihanoukville, Cambodia

Two men were pulled alive from the rubble of a collapsed Cambodian building yesterday, more than two days after the construction site accident that left at least 25 dead.

Hopes that more survivors may be found under the debris had been fading, and the prime minister ordered inspections of all construction sites at the beach town which is undergoing a Chinese-bankrolled development boom. Three Chinese nationals and a Cambodian landowner have been held for questioning.

# 'Tree Man' wants hands amputated

● Doctors had believed they had beaten the disease but Bajandar fled a Dhaka clinic in May last year following a relapse

● Abul Bajandar has had 25 operations since 2016 to remove growths

Dhaka, Bangladesh

A Bangladeshi known as the "Tree Man" because of bark-like growths on his body said yesterday he wanted his hands amputated to relieve him of unbearable pain.

Abul Bajandar has had 25 operations since 2016 to remove growths

from his hands and feet caused by a rare syndrome.

Doctors had believed they had beaten the disease but Bajandar fled a Dhaka clinic in May last year following a relapse.

The 28-year-old father of one was readmitted to hospital in January because the condition worsened, with some growths several inches long.

"I cannot bear the pain anymore. I can't sleep at night. I asked the doctors to cut off my hands so I can at least get some relief," he said.

His mother Amina Bibi supported the plea. "At least he will be free of pain. It's a hellish condition," she said.



Abul Bajandar, 28, dubbed "Tree Man" for massive bark-like warts on his hands and feet, sits at Dhaka Medical College Hospital in Dhaka

"I cannot bear the pain anymore. I can't sleep at night. I asked the doctors to cut off my hands so I can at least get some relief"

ABDUL BAJANDAR

Bajandar suffers from epidermodysplasia verruciformis, a rare genetic condition also known as "tree man syndrome".

Bajandar said he wanted to go abroad for better treatment, but he does not have the money to cover the expenses.

Samanta Lal Sen, the chief plastic surgeon at Dhaka Medical College Hospital, said

a board of seven doctors will discuss Bajandar's condition on Tuesday.

"He gave his personal opinion. But we will do whatever is the best solution for him," said Sen.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina promised free treatment for Bajandar after his plight made national and international headlines.

Bajandar lived in the hospital's private wing for nearly two years during his first round of treatment.

Fewer than half a dozen people around the world are believed to have the syndrome.

The hospital also treated a young Bangladeshi girl suffering from the condition in 2017.

Doctors declared her surgery a success, but her father later said the growths had returned in even greater numbers and the family halted the treatment and returned to their village.

## Boris Becker auctions trophies to pay off debts

London

Trophies and personal souvenirs belonging to German tennis star Boris Becker will be auctioned online by British firm Wyles Hardy to partially clear the bankrupt champion's debts.

The youngest winner in Wimbledon's history, who claimed the first of three titles aged just 17, is auctioning off 82 items including medals, cups, watches and photographs.

The sale will end on July 11, Wyles Hardy said on its website.

Some of the trophies up for grabs include a replica of a Challenge Cup awarded to Becker following one of his Wimbledon wins, and the three-quarter size replica of the Renshaw Cup presented after he became the youngest ever Grand Slam singles champion.

His Wimbledon finalist medal from 1990, when he was beaten by Swede Stefan Edberg, and a replica of the US Open silver cup made by jeweller Tiffany for his



Boris Becker now focuses on his tennis activities, particularly commenting, as he attempts to use his fame to wipe out his debts

1989 victory over Ivan Lendl, will also be included in the sale.

The indebted 51-year-old champion was declared bankrupt in 2017.

In June 2018, he claimed he had diplomatic status and therefore immunity, thus stopping the sale at the last minute.

The former world number one claimed that he had been appointed by the President of the Central African Republic as



Some of the trophies up for grabs include a replica of a Challenge Cup and the three-quarter size replica of the Renshaw Cup presented after he became the youngest ever Grand Slam singles champion

a sporting, cultural and humanitarian "attache" to the European Union. But the Central African Ministry of Foreign Affairs replied that the passport brandished by Becker was a fake one, coming from a batch of "blank passports stolen in 2014".

'Very substantial bids'

Becker finally ended this bi-

zarre episode in December by waiving his right to immunity in a London court specialising in insolvency cases, leading the auction house to put the trophies back on the market.

The first attempt "attracted very substantial bids," Mark Ford, one of the three trustees of Becker's bankruptcy estate, said in a statement.

However, the sales will not be enough to cover debts valued at millions of pounds.

The pastor who married him in 2009 also took him to court in Switzerland and the German courts in 2002 gave him a two-year suspended sentence and a fine of 500,000 euros (\$570,000) over 1.7 million euros in unpaid taxes.



The six-times Grand Slam winner, nicknamed "Boom Boom" Becker for his devastating serve, won 49 titles and more than 20 million euros in prize money during his career