

Two Australian cops shot dead in Victoria State

AFP, Sydney

A gunman opened fire on police Tuesday at a rural Australian property in a "horrific" confrontation that killed two officers and wounded a third.

Police launched a major hunt for the man, who fled into the bush after the shooting in the town of Porepunkah in northeast Victoria, senior officers said.

"The suspect for this horrific event is still at large," Victoria state police chief commissioner Mike Bush said.

"We know that the person is heavily armed. We know that they are dangerous," he told a news conference.

Bush said the outburst of gunfire, which occurred "over minutes", killed a 59-year-old detective and a 35-year-old senior constable.

"They were met by the offender and they were murdered in cold blood," he said.

Another detective was wounded. "He has been shot and is currently in surgery being treated. His injuries are not life threatening."

Ten police had descended on the property in the morning to execute a search warrant when the gunfire broke out, Bush said.

"He was heavily armed and he was able to escape into the bush," the police chief said.



Migrants waded through the sea in an attempt to board an inflatable dinghy leaving the coast of northern France to cross the English Channel to reach Britain, from the beach of Petit-Fort-Philippe in Gravelines, near Calais, France, August 25, 2025. PHOTO: REUTERS

China, Russia ties 'most stable' in turbulent world Says Xi

AFP, Beijing

President Xi Jinping said on Tuesday that China's ties with Russia are the "most stable, mature and strategically significant" among major world powers, state media reported.

During a meeting with Vyacheslav Volodin, chairman of Russia's Duma, or lower house of parliament, Xi hailed the countries' relationship as being a "stable source of world peace", Chinese state broadcaster CCTV said.

"The two sides should... work together to safeguard the security and development interests of both countries, unite the Global South, uphold true multilateralism, and promote the international order towards greater fairness and justice," Xi told Volodin in Beijing's opulent Great Hall of the People.

Former socialist allies with a history of tempestuous ties, relations between Beijing and Moscow have deepened since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

China has never denounced the war nor called for Moscow to withdraw its troops, and many of Ukraine's allies believe that Beijing has provided support to its vast northern neighbour.

FLOOD WARNING Pakistan evacuates 150,000 people

India warns it plans to release excess water from dam

REUTERS, Lahore

Pakistan evacuated at least 150,000 people in areas along three rivers in its agricultural heartland under threat of flooding after neighbouring India warned it plans to release excess water from a dam, officials said on Tuesday.

The arch-rivals have been ravaged by intense rain and flooding in recent weeks. The release of excess water threatens to further inundate part of Pakistan's Punjab province, which serves as the country's breadbasket and accounts for a large part of its food supply.

The nuclear-armed nations have been in a tense stand-off since a brief conflict in May, their worst fighting in decades, and any flooding blamed on New Delhi could inflame ties.

Pakistani officials said they received a surprise warning from India on Monday that it intends to release water from the rapidly filling Madhopur Dam, on its side of Punjab province.

India routinely releases water from its dams when they get too full, with the excess flowing into Pakistan.

An Indian government source said they had not mentioned a specific dam but the intense rain led them to share a second warning with Pakistan through diplomatic channels. Asked if more warnings could be issued as rain continues, he said it was possible.

New Delhi had said on Sunday that it warned Pakistan that large volumes of water would flow into its waterways due to the heavy rainfall.

Three rivers — Ravi, Sutlej and Chenab — flow into Pakistan from Indian territory. Those rivers are seeing medium to high flooding, Pakistan's National Disaster Management Authority said on Tuesday.

Mazhar Hussain, a Pakistani disaster management official, said India will release a controlled amount of water from dams in the coming days. Hundreds of villages situated on the embankment of the three rivers have been evacuated, he said.

AGRICULTURAL HEARTLAND

Pakistan's northwest has been hammered by intense floods, accounting for half of the 799 people killed this monsoon season.

Aid to Gaza still 'drop in the ocean': WFP

AFP, New Delhi

The World Food Programme warned Tuesday that the aid Israel is allowing to enter Gaza remains a "drop in the ocean", days after famine was formally declared in the war-torn Palestinian territory.

The United Nations declared a famine in Gaza on Friday, blaming the "systematic obstruction" of aid by Israel during its nearly two-year war with the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

Carl Skau, WFP's chief operating officer, said that over the past two weeks, there has been a "slight uptick" in aid entering, averaging around 100 trucks per day.

"That's still a drop in the ocean when we're talking about assisting some 2.1 million people," Skau told AFP during a visit to New Delhi.

"We need a completely different level of assistance to be able to turn this trajectory of famine around."

The Rome-based Integrated Food Security Phase Classification Initiative (IPC) said famine was affecting 500,000 people in Gaza.

It defines famine as when 20 percent of households face extreme food shortages, more than 30 percent of children under five are acutely malnourished, and there is an excess mortality threshold of at least 10 in 10,000 people a day.

Skau painted a grim picture of Gaza.

"The levels of desperation are so high that people keep grabbing the food off our trucks," the former Swedish diplomat said.

"And when we're not able to do proper orderly distributions, we're

not sure that we're reaching the most vulnerable — the women and the children furthest out in the camps," he said.

"And they're the ones we really need to reach now, if we want to avoid a full-scale catastrophe."

STARVATION PHASE

But Skau also warned that Gaza was only one of many global crises, with multiple famine zones emerging simultaneously as donor funding collapses.

» UN declared famine in Gaza, blames Israel's obstruction of aid

» 100 trucks enter daily for 2.1 million people

» Food is being seized from trucks out of desperation

Some 320 million people globally are now acutely food insecure — nearly triple the figure from five years ago. At the same time, WFP funding has dropped by 40 percent compared with last year.

"Right now, we're seeing a number of crises that, at any other time in history, would have gotten the headlines and been the top issue discussed," he said.

That includes Sudan, where 25 million people are "acutely food insecure", including 10 million in what Skau called "the starvation phase".

"It's the largest hunger and

humanitarian crisis that we probably have seen in decades — since the end of the 1980s with the Ethiopia famine," he said.

"We have 10 spots in Sudan where famine has been confirmed. It's a disaster of unimaginable magnitude."

He detailed how a UN aid convoy in June tried to break the siege by paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF) of Sudan's city of El-Fasher in Darfur, only for the truck convoy to be hit by a deadly drone attack.

Neighbouring South Sudan is also struggling, he said, suggesting "there might well be a third confirmation of a famine".

"That will be unprecedented," he said, citing "extremely expensive" operations in the young nation's Upper Nile state, where, with few roads, aid must be delivered by helicopters or airdrops.

"This is maybe the number one crisis where you have on one hand staggering needs and, frankly, no resources available," he said.

At the same time, traditional donors have cut aid.

US President Donald Trump slashed foreign aid after taking office, dealing a heavy blow to humanitarian operations worldwide.

"We are in a funding crunch, and the challenge here is that the needs keep going up", Skau said.

While conflict is the "main driver" of rising hunger levels, other causes include "extreme weather events due to climate change" and the economic shock of trade wars.

"Our worry is that we are now cutting from the hungry to give to the starving," he said.

ANIMAL MISTREATMENT Ambani son's wildlife centre faces probe

REUTERS, New Delhi

India's Supreme Court has ordered an investigation into a wildlife rescue centre run by the philanthropic arm of billionaire Mukesh Ambani's group, although it said the centre did not support allegations of unlawful animal acquisitions and mistreatment.

Vantara is a marquee project of the Reliance Foundation and the Ambani family.

Located in western Gujarat state and led by the billionaire's son, Anant Ambani, it has rescued and treated thousands of animals, and built the largest elephant hospital.

It was also one of the venues for Anant's pre-wedding celebrations last year, with the global celebrities who attended advised to don "jungle fever" outfits when visiting Vantara.

The Supreme Court late on Monday ordered an inquiry as it ruled on public interest litigations that referred to complaints by non-profit and wildlife groups alleging mistreatment of animals at Vantara and questioning how the animals ended up at the rescue centre. They also alleged the Central Zoo Authority, the regulatory agency, failed in its duties.

In a written order, the court said although there was no evidence to support the allegations, an independent investigation was needed because the petitions alleged authorities were unwilling to discharge their duties.

"We consider it appropriate in the ends of justice to call for an independent factual appraisal," the court said in its order.



Trump wants to meet N Korea's Kim this year

REUTERS, Washington/Seoul

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday he wanted to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un this year and was open to further trade talks with South Korea even as he lobbied new criticisms at the visiting Asian ally.

"I'd like to meet him this year," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office as he welcomed South Korea's new president, Lee Jae Myung, to the White House for the first time. "I look forward to meeting with Kim Jong Un in the appropriate future."

Despite clinching a trade deal in July that spared South Korean exports harsher U.S. tariffs, the two sides continue to wrangle over nuclear energy, military spending, and details of a deal that included \$350 billion in promised South Korean investments in the United States.

After meeting with Trump, Lee attended a business forum with senior U.S. officials and CEOs of South Korean and U.S. companies.

To coincide with the visit, South Korea's flag carrier, Korean Air 003490, announced an order for 103 Boeing B737 MAX aircraft, the largest order in the airline's history.



Palestinians extend empty pots in front of a charity kitchen to receive cooked rice, in Gaza City on August 23, 2025. The United Nations officially declared a famine in Gaza on August 22, blaming "systematic obstruction" of aid by Israel during more than 22 months of war, with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu swiftly dismissing the findings. PHOTO: AFP

SCO SUMMIT Xi to welcome Putin, Modi next week

REUTERS, Beijing

President Xi Jinping will gather more than 20 world leaders at a regional security forum in China next week in a powerful show of Global South solidarity in the age of Donald Trump while also helping sanctions-hit Russia pull off another diplomatic coup.

Aside from Russian President Vladimir Putin, leaders from Central Asia, the Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia have been invited to the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) summit, to be held in the northern port city of Tianjin from August 31 to September 1.

The summit will feature Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first visit to China in more than seven years as the two neighbours work on further defusing tensions roiled by deadly border clashes in 2020.

Modi last shared the same stage with Xi and Putin at last year's BRICS summit in Kazan, Russia, even as Western leaders turned their backs on the Russian leader amid the war in Ukraine. Russian embassy officials in New Delhi last week said Moscow hopes trilateral talks with China and India will take place soon.