

# Dean slams Jamaica



trying to avoid rain and wind of Hurricane Dean yesterday.



Port Royal resident Alvin Richards boards his house.

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■ Center of Category 4 storm passes south of Kingston overnight as some residents flee, but others stay; Caymans are next in system's path

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

KINGSTON, Jamaica — Hurricane Dean pummeled Jamaica with gusting winds and torrential rains last night after a last-minute plea for residents to abandon their homes and head for shelter was ignored by many.

Dean, which earlier killed eight people on its destructive march across the Caribbean, triggered evacuation calls from the Cayman Islands to Texas, and forced the Space Shuttle to cut short its mission. Cruise ships changed course to avoid it, but some tourists in Jamaica could not flee before the island's airports closed late Saturday.

The National Hurricane Center said the first hurricane of the Atlantic season was projected to reach a Category 5 classification with sustained winds of 160 mph before crashing into the Cayman Islands today and Mexico's Yucatan peninsula after that. The Mexican mainland or Texas could be hit later.

Hurricane-force winds began lashing Jamaica yesterday afternoon, said meteorologist Rebecca Waddington at the National Hurricane Center in Miami. Forecasters said Jamaica would take a near-direct hit with Dean's eye passing just to the south overnight.

The government set up more than 1,000 shelters in converted schools, churches and the indoor national sports arena. Authorities urged people to take cover from the storm, which had maximum sustained winds of 145 mph and was expected to

dump up to 20 inches of rain on the island.

But only 47 shelters were occupied as the storm began hitting, said Cecil Bailey of the Office of Disaster Preparedness and Emergency Management. "For the last time, I'm asking you to leave or you will be in danger," Prime Minister Portia Simpson Miller urged residents earlier as the storm loomed offshore.

George Lee, mayor of the Portmore community near the capital of Kingston, said appeals to evacuate had gone unheeded. Some islanders said they were afraid for their belongings if they moved to shelters. "Too much crime in Kingston. I'm not leaving my home," Paul Lyn said in Port Royal, east of Kingston.

Authorities also cut power on the island to prevent damage to electrical infrastructure. Assistant Commissioner of Police Linval Bailey said police were sent to commercial districts to prevent looting and curfews were imposed until this evening. Police got into a shootout with looters at a shopping center in the central Jamaican parish of Clarendon, but no one was hurt.

In Nicaragua, a 4-year-old girl died when a boat she was on sank Saturday night amid high winds and waves in the Kukra River, a local newspaper reported. The hurricane created massive waves and surges high as 20 feet as it passed the Dominican Republic on Saturday, flooding roads and drowning a boy. At least two people were killed and about 150 homes destroyed in Haiti, emergency officials said.