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DIRE FORECAST

Hurricane Melissa bears down on Jamaica; could be island's strongest storm



A man wades through a flooded street ahead of the forecasted arrival of Hurricane Melissa in Old Harbour, Jamaica, on Monday. PHOTOS BY MATIAS DELACROIX/ASSOCIATED PRESS

By John Myers Jr. and Dánica Coto
ASSOCIATED PRESS

KINGSTON, Jamaica — Hurricane Melissa intensified into a Category 5 storm Monday as it drew closer to Jamaica, where forecasters expected it to unleash catastrophic flooding, landslides and widespread damage. At that strength, it would be the strongest hurricane to hit the island since record-keeping began in 1851.

Blamed for six deaths in the northern Caribbean as it headed toward the island, Melissa was on track to make landfall Tuesday in Jamaica before coming ashore in Cuba later in the day and then heading toward the Bahamas. It was not expected to affect the United States.

Anticipating the hardship in store for his country, Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness said, "I have been on my knees in prayer."

Hanna Mcleod, a 23-year-old hotel receptionist in the Jamaican capital of Kingston, said she boarded up the windows at her home, where her husband and brother are staying. She stocked up on canned corned beef and mackerel and left candles and flashlights throughout the house.

"I just told them to keep the door closed," she said. "I am definitely worried. This is actually the first time I'll be experiencing this type of hurricane."

Category 5 is the top of the Saffir-Simpson hurricane scale, with sustained winds exceeding 157 mph. Melissa would be the strongest hurricane in recorded history to directly hit



A fisherman ties boats in preparation for the forecasted arrival of Hurricane Melissa in Old Harbour, Jamaica, on Monday.

the small Caribbean nation, said Jonathan Porter, chief meteorologist at AccuWeather.

A storm surge of up to 13 feet was expected along coastal Kingston, which Porter said is home to critical infrastructure such as Jamaica's main international airport and power plants.

"This can become a true humanitarian crisis very quickly, and there is likely going to be the need for a lot of international support," Porter said in a phone interview.

SYSTEM HAS WINDS OF 175 MPH

On Monday afternoon, Melissa was centered about 145 miles southwest of Kingston and about 325 miles southwest of Guantánamo, Cuba. The system had maximum sustained winds of 175 mph and was moving west-northwest at 3 mph, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami.

Parts of eastern Jamaica could see up to 30 inches of rain while western Haiti could get 16 inches, the hurricane center

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Popular restaurant closes after 92 years

Remembering the heyday of Perugino's in Luzerne

By Bob Kalinowski
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LUZERNE — Andy Perugino's Restaurant, a landmark business where area families and prominent politicians gathered for generations to enjoy Italian cuisine or attend functions in a private banquet room, has closed after 92 years, the owner announced Sunday.

"After many incredible years of serving you, we've made the difficult decision to close our doors due to health reasons. This wasn't an easy choice — this restaurant has been our home, our passion, and our connection to so many of you who have become like family," the owner Ray Fedor posted on Facebook. "We are deeply grateful for every meal shared, every celebration held, and every memory made within these walls. Your support and loyalty over the years have meant more to us than words can express."

Fedor purchased the iconic restaurant in August 2018 from the Perugino/Reilly family, keeping the restaurant's namesake.

Andy Perugino, who died in June 1989, founded the restaurant at 258 Charles St. in Luzerne in 1933 and later passed it down to his daughter Andrea Perugino-Reilly and her husband, Ron, who ran the restaurant many years with their children.

Members of the founding family stayed on until the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, which upended the restaurant industry, said Andy

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LVHN move to drop insurance from UnitedHealthcare affects 70K patients

By Crissa DeBree
THE MORNING CALL

Lehigh Valley Health Network said Monday it plans to drop UnitedHealthcare insurance plans, a move that could lead to higher out-of-pocket costs for about 70,000 patients starting next year.

A spokesperson for UnitedHealthcare criticized the move, saying LVHN was using consumers as "leverage."

LVHN, part of Jefferson Health, said it had been negotiating with UnitedHealthcare on new contract terms for more than two years, but those efforts have failed. It sent a letter to UnitedHealthcare on Monday.

"Like all health systems, we are facing significant headwinds as costs rise faster than reimbursement," Mark Whalen, executive vice president and enterprise chief strategy and transformation officer for Jefferson

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Geisinger using AI to identify patients at high risk for breast cancer

By Stephen Mocarsky
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PLAINS TWP. — Geisinger has begun an artificial intelligence pilot program to help identify patients at high risk for breast cancer, health system officials announced Monday.

Ron Beer, chief administrative officer for the Geisinger Northeast Region, welcomed state health and insurance officials to Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center "to share some valuable information about a disease that the American Cancer Society says will affect one in eight women throughout the course of their lifetime."

Dr. Ahmad Hanif, division chief of Hematology and Oncology for Geisinger Northeast Region, noted that the renovation and expansion of the Frank and Dorothea Henry

Cancer Center at Geisinger Wyoming Valley three years ago included a state-of-the-art breast clinic. And, earlier this summer, Geisinger opened the Dickson City Cancer Center to expand service offerings in Lackawanna County.

"In Dickson City, we now offer a broader spectrum of care with new technology and advancements in cancer treatment. One of the ways we are doing that is through our artificial intelligence-enabled breast cancer screening program, which identifies high-risk patients and refers them for appropriate care," Hanif said.

The AI model evaluates primary care patients who are overdue for a mammogram and flags the patients at the highest risk of breast cancer based on information in their electronic health records. The

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Pennsylvania Insurance Department Policy Director Caroline Beohm speaks about insurance coverage of breast cancer screening during a visit to the Geisinger Wyoming Valley Medical Center on Monday. JASON ARDAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

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