

3 Islands Left
Partly Crippled
By Hurricane

First Glimpses of Ruin
in the Caribbean

This article is by **Nazaneen Ghafar**, **André Paultre**, **Jovan Johnson** and **Michael Levenson**.

Hurricane Melissa blasted Cuba and Haiti with torrential rain and howling winds on Wednesday, inflicting even more damage just hours after it devastated parts of Jamaica, ripping the roofs off homes and hospitals, flooding villages and littering roads with trees and electrical poles.

In both Haiti and Jamaica, the authorities began to tally the dead. Around 20 people, including children, died in a Haitian community where swollen rivers spilled into homes, and at least three bodies were found in St. Elizabeth, a hard-hit parish in southwestern Jamaica, where Melissa struck the island as a Category 5 hurricane.

In that parish, the storm left a “complete disaster,” said Floyd Green, the agricultural minister. “Entire buildings have collapsed,” he said, adding that he had heard reports of villages where “every single house is without a roof.”

Two of the three bodies found in Jamaica were in the Black River area, and the third was in the Galeon Beach area, said Superintendent Coleridge Minto, the head of the St. Elizabeth Parish police. It was not immediately clear how the people had died. But he said the parish’s church, tax office, council office, supermarket and bakery had been badly damaged.

“Everything has been washed away by floodwaters, and so the situation is, in fact, very bad,” he said, adding that there was “an urgent need for support.”

Communication problems and power outages were hampering the authorities’ ability to assess the full scope of the devastation. Nearly 80 percent of the country was without electricity on Wednesday morning, said Dana Morris Dixon, Jamaica’s information minister.

“I know so many people have said they cannot reach their families in western Jamaica. That’s because of damage to the telecoms infrastructure,” she said at a

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Treasure Beach in Jamaica on Wednesday. Hurricane Melissa rampaged ashore as a Category 5 hurricane before heading to Cuba.

A Nuclear Linchpin Battles Wear, Tear and Time

By **ALICIA INEZ GUZMÁN**

LOS ALAMOS, N.M. — In a sprawling building atop a mesa in New Mexico, workers labor around the clock to fulfill a vital mission: producing America’s nuclear bomb cores.

The effort is uniquely challenging. Technicians at Los Alamos National Laboratory must handle hazardous plutonium to create the grapefruit-size cores, known as pits. They do so in a nearly 50-year-old building under renovation to address aging infrastructure and equipment breakdowns that have at times disrupted operations or spread radioactive contamination, The New York Times found.

Now, the laboratory is under increasing pressure to meet the federal government’s ambitions to upgrade the nation’s nuclear arsenal. The \$1.7 trillion project includes everything from revitalizing

Los Alamos Updating
Arsenal Amid Aging
Infrastructure

missile silos burrowed deep in five states, to producing new warheads that contain the pits, to arming new land-based missiles, bomber jets and submarines.

But the overall modernization effort is years behind schedule, with costs ballooning by the billions, according to the Congressional Budget Office. In 2018, Congress charged Los Alamos with making an annual quota of 30 pits by 2026, but by last year it had produced just one approved for the nuclear stockpile. (Officials have not disclosed whether more have been made since then.)

That pace has put the lab — and especially the building called Plutonium Facility 4, or PF-4 — under

scrutiny by Trump administration officials.

In August, James Danly, the deputy secretary of the Energy Department, ordered a study of the leadership and procedures involved in pit production and related projects at Los Alamos and the Savannah River Site in Aiken, S.C. That facility was also designated to produce pits but is unlikely to begin before 2032, according to federal officials.

“I have become increasingly concerned about the National Nuclear Security Administration’s ability to consistently deliver on nuclear weapons production capabilities needed to support the national defense of the United States,” Mr. Danly wrote to the agency’s acting administrator. The N.N.S.A., an agency within the Energy Department, maintains the nuclear stockpile and is overseeing the renewal project.

In response to questions from

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Growing Peril
In Shutdown

As Critical Days Loom,
What Can End Fight?

By **CARL HULSE**
and **CATIE EDMONDSON**

WASHINGTON — Senate Republicans were confident that the call on Monday from the largest federal employees union for an end to the government shutdown would finally nudge labor-allied Senate Democrats to move toward resolving the stalemate entering its fifth week.

Democrats were instead mostly unmoved.

Their bet was that news on Wednesday of soaring health care premiums because of expiring Obamacare tax credits might finally persuade Republicans to negotiate on extending the subsidies. That didn’t pan out either; G.O.P. leaders have so far refused — at least until the government reopens.

Now the question is: What, if anything, can break the impasse that has led to federal workers being idled and force the warring parties to a solution? Several major inflection points are approaching, including the Nov. 1 start of Obamacare open enrollment, an imminent suspension of federal nutrition benefits for millions of struggling Americans and closely watched off-year elections next Tuesday that could be a gauge of political momentum.

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ON KOREAN VISIT,
TRUMP SETS GOAL
TO BROKER PEACE

LAVISH PRAISE BY HOST

As South Fetes President,
North’s Only Reaction
Is a Missile Test

This article is by **Erica L. Green**, **Katie Rogers** and **Choe Sang-Hun**.

GYEONGJU, South Korea — As President Trump started his six-day tour in Asia, he said he would like to meet again with North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong-un. And he reiterated that desire this week again and again.

But asked what he wanted to discuss with Mr. Kim, the president had no clear answer.

Now it seems Mr. Trump knows what he wants from Mr. Kim.

On Wednesday, Mr. Trump landed in South Korea for the last leg of his tour of Asia. He was greeted with fanfare and flattery over his newfound obsession of ending global conflicts.

President Lee Jae Myung of South Korea presented Mr. Trump with a medal symbolizing the nation’s highest honor “in recognition of his contribution to peace on the Korean Peninsula and his continued role as a peacemaker.” He was served a meal that included a “peacemaker’s dessert” that included a brownie flecked with gold.

Mr. Lee told Mr. Trump, “It would be a historic achievement if you use your great capabilities to



HAIYUN JIANG/THE NEW YORK TIMES

President Trump vowed to get
the conflict “straightened out.”

create peace on the Korean Peninsula.”

It was, in essence, a premature accolade — South Korea and North Korea are technically at war, as they have been for three-quarters of a century.

But soon enough, Mr. Trump vowed to earn it.

Mr. Trump indicated he would reopen dialogue with Mr. Kim, the North’s leader, telling Mr. Lee that he wanted to address “a lingering cloud that’s over your head.” He lamented that his schedule hadn’t

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HISTORY LESSON China’s leader takes a defiant cue from the 19th-century Opium War for his trade dispute with the U.S. **PAGE A8**

College Is Selling Black History Murals to Avert Financial Crisis

By **ARTHUR LUBOW**

TALLADEGA, Ala. — In May 2024, soon after Rica Lewis-Payton became board chair of Talladega College, a historically Black institution in rural Alabama, she faced a crisis. The college, which has a paltry endowment of under \$5 million, couldn’t meet its payroll that month. “We had to look at every asset that we have,” Lewis-Payton, a retired hospital executive and 1981 Talladega alumna, said in an interview.

Talladega’s outstanding asset was a group of six remarkable murals that the Black artist Hale Woodruff painted there between 1939 and 1942, commemorating interracial cooperation in the African American struggle for freedom and advancement. One, a swirling tableau of men overwhelming their captors on a slave ship, titled “The Mutiny on the Amistad,” is the artist’s most dramatic painting. Another is an emotionally powerful depiction of the Underground Railroad, with allies of both races ushering enslaved people to liberty. In all, “they are Woodruff’s crowning achievement, and among the best American murals,” the art historian Barbara Haskell, a longtime Whitney Museum curator, said in an interview.

Over the last year, Lewis-Payton oversaw a sale in which Talladega will relinquish ownership



WES FRAZER FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Murals that Hale Woodruff painted at Talladega College in Alabama between 1939 and 1942.

of four of the six Woodruff murals to the Toledo Museum of Art and two art foundations, in return for an undisclosed sum that art experts estimate at \$20 million. “It required deliberate thought and execution,” Lewis-Payton said. “I sit here today feeling good that we are leveraging this most prized possession in a way that will im-

prove the ability of the college to provide a foundational education for people like me.”

Lewis-Payton said she understood that the sale of these paintings would surrender a key piece of Talladega’s legacy and potentially provoke vehement opposition. Yet the college administrators realized the works were going

mostly unseen. In 2012, the murals were removed for conservation and then sent off on a four-year, eight-city tour, in what Roberta Smith, writing in The New York Times, called a “stunning exhibition.” Despite that exposure, once they returned to Talladega to be installed in a new museum

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SPORTS B7-11

In This Series, They Can’t Lose

Buddy Kennedy, above, and José Ureña played for both the Dodgers and the Blue Jays this year. They’ll get rings. **PAGE B9**

Tight Ends Have a Tight Bond

Stewards of the position in the N.F.L. are determined to pass down knowledge and lore to a new generation. **PAGE B7**

INTERNATIONAL A4-10

Street Battles in Ukraine

Russian forces infiltrated Pokrovsk after months of attacks on the city, a strategic part of Ukraine’s eastern defenses. **PAGE A4**

Dutch Rebuke to the Far Right

A center-left party was poised to become the Netherlands largest political party, a setback to Geert Wilders. **PAGE A6**

BUSINESS B1-6

The Fed Cuts Interest Rates

The U.S. central bank voted to lower borrowing costs by a quarter of a percentage point. **PAGE B1**



ARTS C1-8

Frighteningly Creative

We list the Met Museum’s most haunting works. Above, “Ugolino and His Sons” by Jean-Baptiste Carpeaux. **PAGE C4**

Game Time for Erykah Badu

The singer and songwriter discusses her reign as one of music’s most idiosyncratic and spiritual figures. **PAGE C1**

NATIONAL A11-21

A Murder Inquiry Is Derailed

Just as local officials say they were close to solving the 1983 killing of a woman in rural Oregon, the Justice Department cut funding that supported the cold-case investigation. **PAGE A11**

Behind C.D.C.’s Dismantling

The agency has lost a third of its work force this year. The Trump administration maintains that the cuts are necessary, but critics say that there is no real plan, only animosity. **PAGE A15**

OPINION A22-23

Tressie McMillan Cottom **PAGE A22**



THURSDAY STYLES D1-8

Luscious Hair at Any Length

Short and long, bouncy and braided, hairstyles with body stood out at recent fashion weeks held in New York, London, Milan and Paris. **PAGE D7**

