

Dean becomes first 2007 Atlantic hurricane

by UPI

MIAMI -- Tropical Storm Dean gained strength Thursday to become the first Atlantic hurricane of 2007 and was headed for the Caribbean. Forecasters at the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami said Dean had sustained winds of 75 mph at 5 a.m., just enough to become a Category 1 hurricane. Dean was 485 miles east of Barbados moving west at 24 mph and was expected to strengthen and reach the islands Friday morning. Hurricane warnings or watches were posted in Dominica, St. Lucia, Martinique, Guadeloupe and its dependencies, and a tropical storm watch was issued for Barbados, St. Maarten and St. Vincent. Forecasters told the Miami Herald there was concern Dean would threaten Jamaica or Mexico's Yucatan peninsula as a much stronger storm by the weekend.

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