

Hurricane Edouard threatens U.S.

CARIBBEAN STORMS may land on eastern shores as early as Labor Day.

By WYCLIFFE RICHARDSON
Associated Press

THE VALLEY, Anguilla — Rugged surf threatened northeast Florida as a powerful Atlantic hurricane appeared ready to turn northward Thursday, and residents of this Caribbean town braced for a brush by yet another hurricane.

The mid-Atlantic states were urged to keep a close eye on Hurricane Edouard, which was packing winds of up to 140 mph and was expected to turn slowly northward.

Forecasters said it was too early to say whether Edouard would hit the U.S. mainland.

"Anybody from the Carolinas northward should be paying attention to Edouard because it's not completely clear what happens three days (from now) and beyond," forecaster Mike Hopkins of the National Hurricane Center said from Miami.

A rough-surf advisory was posted for northeast Florida beaches over the Labor Day weekend. The weather service said Edouard should pass well east of Florida, but could come ashore in

the Carolinas. It was projected to cause dangerous rip currents and moderate easterly swells starting Thursday night.

The height of the Atlantic hurricane season is late August and mid-September.

At 5 p.m. the center of Edouard was about 785 miles south southeast of Cape Hatteras, N.C.

Hotel and restaurant owners along the North Carolina coast — hoping for a strong Labor Day weekend — lamented the storm's timing.

Customers were calling for reservations steadily "until the weathermen kept telling us that the hurricane was coming here," said Bill Cherry, owner of the Breezeway Motel at Topsail Beach.

Meanwhile, Hurricane Fran was turning away from the northeastern Caribbean.

A hurricane watch was canceled for the northeastern Leeward Islands, from Antigua through St. Martin, with Fran projected to pass well to the north. The storm carried 75-mph winds and was expected to pass closest to the islands early Friday, forecasters said.

Despite the cancellation, residents in The Valley, Anguilla, 175 miles east of Puerto Rico, stocked up on canned food, batteries and water to guard against any damage caused by the storm's winds and waves. Authorities reviewed shelter plans.

"The people seem to be more pre-

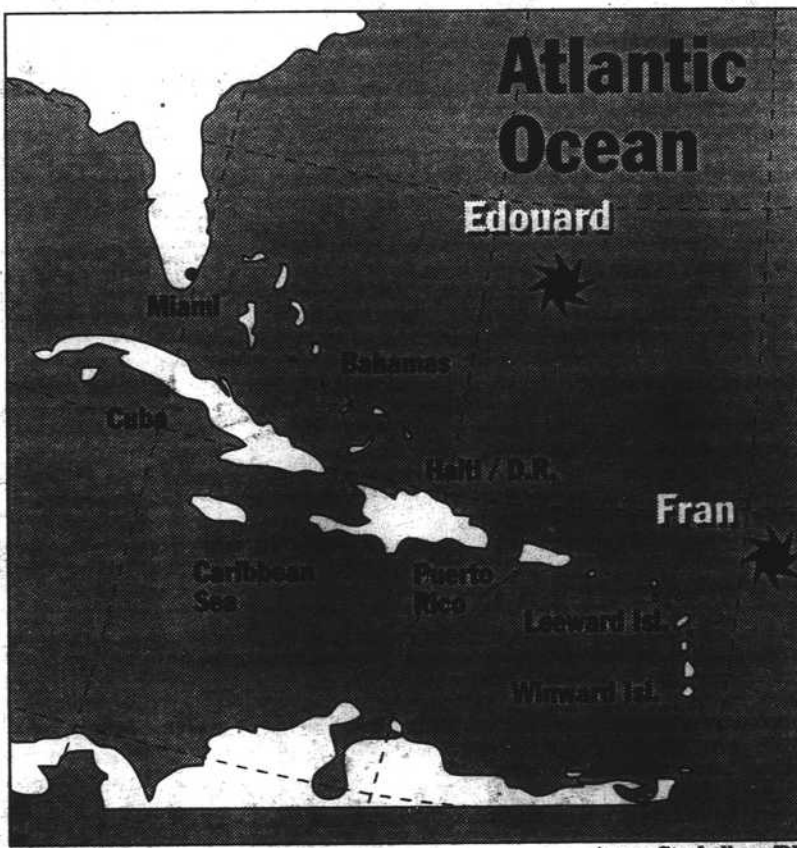
pared now for a hurricane striking the island than they did a year ago," said Connie Brooks, a store manager.

At 4 p.m., Fran was about 255 miles east-northeast of Antigua. It was moving west-northwest at 15 mph.

Tropical Storm Gustav followed far

behind Fran and Edouard, centered about 860 miles west-southwest of the Cape Verde islands in the eastern Atlantic at 10 a.m.

Gustav was traveling northwest at about 13 mph with top winds near 45 mph.



Source: AP

Aaron Steckelberg/DN

Israelis, PLO face possible confrontation

JERUSALEM (AP) — In a massive display of anger, Palestinians slammed shut shops and businesses across the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem Thursday to protest Israel's expansion of Jewish settlements and slowness in resuming peace talks.

The prospect of a direct confrontation between Palestinian protesters and the Israeli army loomed today. Yasser Arafat called for mass prayers at Jerusalem's Al-Aqsa Mosque, even though most Palestinians are barred from entering the city. Israeli troops were ordered to reinforce entrance checkpoints.

The four-hour general strike was a show of Palestinian support for Arafat in his struggle with Israel's new hard-line government.

In what appeared to be a small victory for the Palestinians, top negotiators from both sides — Dan Shomron and Saeb Erakat — held an unscheduled meeting Thursday. It was their first meeting since Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took office in June.

So far, Netanyahu has refused to meet with Arafat or commit himself to completing Israel's overdue troop pullout from Hebron, the last West Bank city under Israeli control.

Daily Nebraskan

FAX NUMBER: 472-1761

The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during summer sessions.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by calling 472-2588. The public has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Tim Hedegaard.

Subscription price is \$50 for one year.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, Neb.

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