

Hurricane Katia Forms as Second Full Cyclone of Atlantic Season

Hurricane Katia formed as the second major storm of the Atlantic Season and is headed west-northwest across the ocean, U.S. weather officials said in a notice.

Katia, 1,165 miles (1,875 kilometers) east of the Leeward Islands in the Caribbean, had maximum winds near 75 miles per hour, up from 65 mph earlier, the National Hurricane Center said in an advisory at about 11 p.m. New York time yesterday. The storm is traveling at 20 mph and may move to the north of Puerto Rico by Sept. 4, the Miami-based center said. "Additional strengthening is forecast during the next 48 hours," the center said in the advisory. "Katia could become a major hurricane by the weekend." Katia is the 11th named storm of this Atlantic hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. The NHC says the average hurricane season usually produces that many in total. While the storm is forecast to turn north out to sea eventually, a shift westward could bring it to land in eastern Canada, according to private forecaster AccuWeather. Canada's Atlantic region, a major gasoline supplier for the Northeast, exported 469,704 cubic meters (2.96 million barrels) of the fuel in May. Gulf System A system of clouds and thunderstorms over the southeastern Gulf of Mexico has a 60 percent chance of organizing into a tropical cyclone in the next two days, the hurricane center said in a weather outlook before 8 p.m. East Coast time yesterday. "Interests along the entire northern Gulf of Mexico coast should monitor the progress of this disturbance," the center said in its outlook. BP Plc began yesterday removing more than 500 non-essential workers from some platforms in the Southern Green Canyon area, according to a message on the company's hurricane hot line. The London-based company said it is preparing for a potential shut-in and full evacuation if necessary. Anadarko Petroleum Corp. evacuated non-essential workers from its Gunnison, Nansen and Boomvang platforms in the western Gulf, according to a notice on the Woodlands, Texas-based company's website. Landfall in Texas "If that storm develops, it will likely sit in the Gulf for a couple days," said Sean Miller, project manager for Kinetic Analysis Corp., a Silver Spring, Maryland-based firm that predicts the effects of disasters. "Right now the models are pretty divergent as to where it will make landfall, but it will probably be somewhere in southern Texas." Apache Corp., Chevron Corp., ConocoPhillips, Enbridge Inc., Exxon Mobil Corp., Marathon Oil Corp. and Royal Dutch Shell Plc said yesterday they are monitoring the system. The Gulf is home to 31 percent of U.S. oil output and 7 percent of the country's natural gas production.