

Oil Workers Missing off Stormy Mexico Coast

the Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's state oil company said it was searching for 10 workers from a Texas-based company who were evacuated from a platform in the Gulf of Mexico ahead of Tropical Storm Nate.

Petroleos Mexicanos said in a late-Thursday news release that the workers are employed by Geokinetics Inc., based in Houston. Pemex gave few details about the workers, but said they had disappeared after being evacuated from the Trinity II platform by Geokinetics and that two Pemex vessels were being used to search for them.

Calls before business hours Friday to Pemex and Geokinetics were not answered. Geokinetics specializes in seismic studies for the oil and gas industry.

Tropical Storm Nate was drifting over the southern Gulf Friday with maximum sustained winds of near 65 mph (100 kph), according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami. It was centered about 125 miles (200 kilometers) west of Campeche. Forecasters said it was expected to become a hurricane later Friday or Saturday and hit Mexico's Gulf Coast Sunday or Monday.

Tropical Storm Maria, meanwhile, was heading toward the Lesser Antilles in the Atlantic and rain from what had been Tropical Storm Lee continued inundating a wide portion of Pennsylvania and other northeastern states, leaving at least seven dead.

Maria's maximum sustained winds early Friday were near 40 mph (65 kph), with some slight strengthening possible, according to the U.S. National Hurricane Center in Miami. The storm was centered about 185 miles (295 kilometers) east-northeast of Barbados and it was moving toward the west-northwest near 18 mph (30 kph).

A tropical storm warning was in effect for a host of islands: Antigua, Anguilla, Barbuda, Montserrat, Nevis, St. Kitts, the British Virgin Islands, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guadeloupe, St. Maartin, Saba and St. Eustatius.

A tropical storm watch was in effect for St. Barthelemy, St. Marteen, Martinique, Dominica, and Puerto Rico including Vieques and Culebra.

On its current forecast track, Maria's center would reach the Leeward Islands early Saturday and be near the Virgin Islands by Saturday night, the hurricane center said.

Also in the Atlantic, Hurricane Katia was moving northeast over open water after passing between the U.S. and Bermuda. Despite not hitting land, the hurricane center said large swells generated by the Category 1 storm will continue affecting

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the U.S. East Coast and Bermuda.

Katia was centered about 395 miles (640 kilometers) north-northwest of Bermuda and was moving northeast near 24 mph (39 kph).

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