TRMM satellite sees newborn Tropical Storm Pakhar's heavy rain

March 29 2012

System 96W intensified overnight and became Tropical Storm Pakhar during the morning hours on March 29. NASA's TRMM satellite measured rainfall rates within the storm, and noticed areas of heavy rain west of the center as the storm continued to strengthen.

NASA's Tropical Rainfall Measuring Mission (TRMM) satellite passed over Pakhar on March 29, and saw that it was generating mostly light to moderate rainfall around the entire system, with areas of heavy rain in the southwestern and northeastern quadrants. Light to moderate rainfall rates were between .78 to 1.57 inches (20 to 40 mm) per hour and heavy rain was falling at a rate of 2 inches/50 mm per hour. The banding of thunderstorms has continued to consolidate and strengthen since March 28, which accounts for the cyclone's increase in strength.

On March 29 at 1500 UTC (11 a.m. EDT) Pakhar's maximum sustained winds virtually exploded from 35 knots (40.2 mph/64.8 kph) to 60 knots (69 mph/111 kph) within 12 hours because it is in an environment with lower wind shear and warm sea surface temperatures. Pakhar is centered near 10.0 North and 111.6 East, about 300 nautical miles east of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. It is moving to the west-northwest near 3 knots (3.4 mph/5.5 kph).

Forecasters at the Joint Typhoon Warning Center expect Pakhar to make landfall in central Vietnam, north of Ho Chi Minh City on March 31. Residents should prepare for rough surf along beaches, gusty winds and heavy rainfall.

Provided by NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center

Citation: TRMM satellite sees newborn Tropical Storm Pakhar's heavy rain (2012, March 29) retrieved 19 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2012-03-trmm-satellite-newborn-tropical-storm.html

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