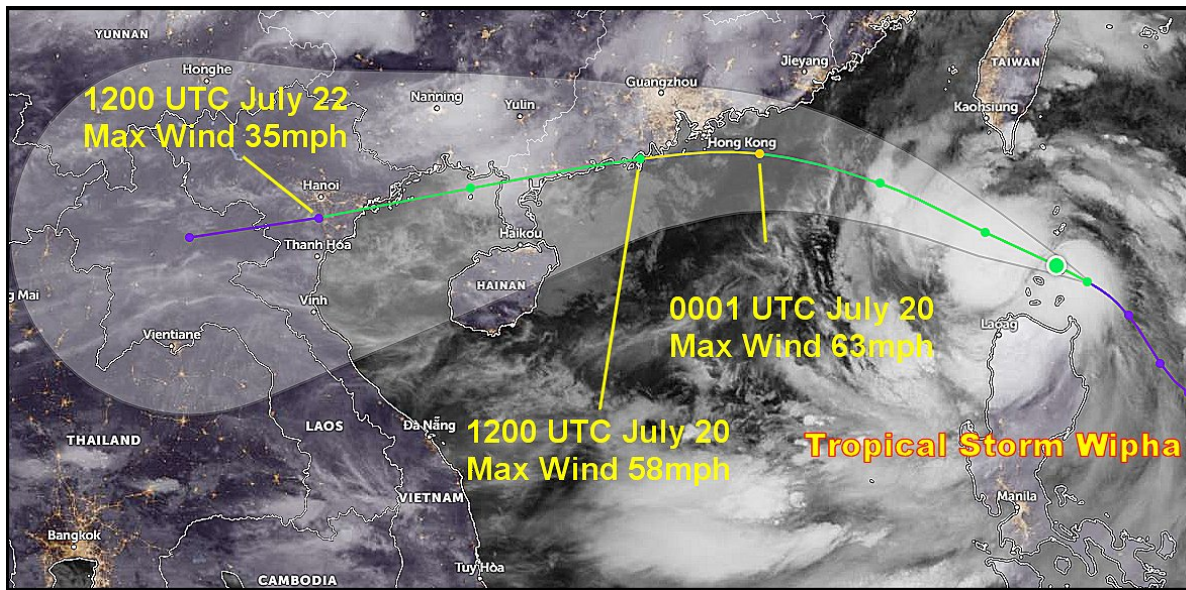


Tropical Storm Wipha To Bring Flooding To South China

By Drew Lerner

Kansas City, July 18 (World Weather Inc.) – *Tropical Storm Wipha formed near the north coast of Luzon Island, Philippines today and was expected to strengthen while moving toward Guangdong China this weekend. The storm will then turn to the west and bring flooding rain to western Guangdong, southern Guangxi and portions of both northern Hainan and northern Vietnam. Landfall in northern Vietnam is expected early next week. In the meantime, flooding rain is expected today and Saturday in the northwest half of Luzon Island.*



At 1500 UTC today, the center of tropical storm Wipha was located 70 miles north of the Luzon Island, Philippines near 19.6 north latitude and 122.0 east longitude moving northwest at 13 mph and producing maximum sustained wind speeds of 40 mph. Tropical storm force wind was occurring out 180 miles from the center of the storm. Satellite imagery suggested some heavy rain was occurring in northwestern parts of Luzon Island as well as many of the smaller islands north to southern Taiwan.

Wipha will intensify tonight and Saturday as it moves northwest over open water in the South China Sea. The storm is expected to pass south of Hong Kong after 0300 UTC Sunday and then move along the western Guangdong coast to the west the remainder of the day Sunday. The storm will turn west to southwesterly late Sunday into Monday allowing the storm to follow the southern China coast and then move across the Gulf of Tonkin (the Beibu Gulf).

Very heavy rain will accompany the storm as it moves along the western Guangdong coast with moisture totals of 5.00 to 10.00 inches common and a few amounts of 10-15 inches. The storm's forward speed should be great enough to minimize the greatest rainfall. Wind speeds are unlikely to be high enough to induce much property or crop damage, although there may be a few exceptions. There may be some flood damage along the coast and especially in the Leizhou Peninsula. Lighter rain will fall in Hainan and areas farther to the north of the Guangdong coast.

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Tropical Storm Wipha will weaken as it moves west along the China coast during the late weekend. The system will eventually move over the northern Gulf of Tonkin or the Beibu Gulf Sunday before reaching northern Vietnam south Hanoi Monday. The storm's peak wind speed should decrease below tropical storm status as the system comes inland over the Vietnam Coast. Rainfall in northern Vietnam early next week will vary from 5.00 to 10.00 inches with a few greater amounts resulting in flooding.

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