WMO Third Pole RCC Network
(In Demonstration Phase)

Monthly Climate Bulletin in the Third Pole Region
August 2026

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Highlights

- In August 2026, surface air temperatures (SATs) were generally above normal across most of the Third Pole (TP) region.

- Precipitation anomalies exhibited marked regional heterogeneity, with large areas of the Tarim Basin and western TP experiencing a precipitation reduction of more than 50%.

- For the month, the snow cover extent (SCE) has dropped to the lowest level of the past snow year, but was 24.1% higher than the 2005-2020 average. Similar to July, more-than-normal snow concentrated in the western TPCR[1], while it was less than normal along the Himalayas and the Nyenchen Tanglha Mountains.

- Floods and debris flow have been the most prominent high-impact events (HIE) during the month. In the first half of the month, due to persistent monsoon rainfall, several floods struck the northeastern India and the central-eastern Afghanistan, and a severe landslide affected the mountainous area of Rolpa District in central-western Nepal. On 26 August, a severe debris flow, formed during the rapid descent of a large-scale ice/rock avalanche in northern Nepal, heavily struck Gyirong Port in Gyirong County, China, and the Rasuwa District in Nepal, causing heavy casualties and numerous people reported missing in both China and Nepal.

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[1] TPCR refers to the region with elevation above 2000 m within the TPRCC-Network service domain, i.e. the region within black contour in Figures 1-3.

1. Monthly Overview

1.1 Temperature

In August 2026, surface air temperatures (SATs) were generally above normal across most of the Third Pole (TP) region, with localized areas in the western part of the Third Pole core region (TPCR) recording anomalies exceeding 4°C. In contrast, areas with near-normal SATs were mainly confined to localized areas of TPCR and the southwestern TP region (Figure 1).

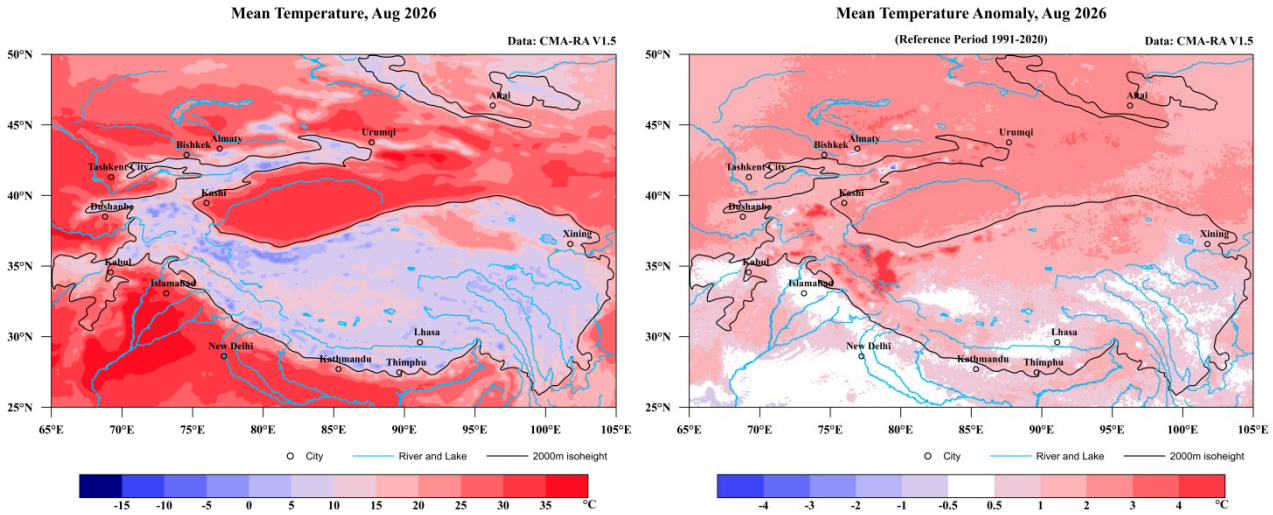


Figure 1 Monthly mean surface air temperature (left) and anomalies (relative to 1991-2020, right) in August 2026.
Data source: CMA-RA V1.5

1.2 Precipitation

For the month, precipitation anomalies exhibited marked regional heterogeneity. Areas with above-normal total precipitation were mainly distributed in the western and southern parts of the TPCR, as well as the central-northern part of the TP region, with some localized areas receiving more than twice the climatological normal amount. In contrast, precipitation was predominantly below normal over the central and northeastern TPCR, the Tarim Basin, and the western and southern parts of the TP region, with large areas of Tarim Basin and the western TP region recording a reduction of over 50% (Figure 2).

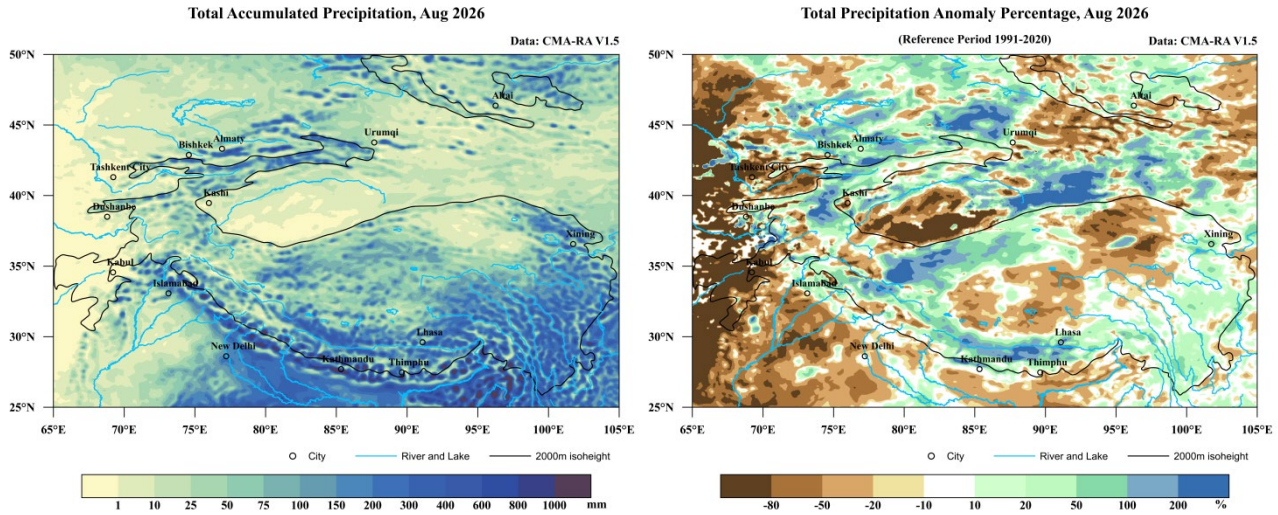


Figure 2 Monthly precipitation totals (left) and anomalies by percentage (right, relative to 1991-2020) in August 2026.
Data source: CMA-RA V1.5

1.3 Snow Cover

In August 2026, the snow cover extent (SCE) over the TP region has dropped to the lowest level of the past snow year, covering an area of 0.24×10^6 km^2, of which 98.2% located in TPCR. This value was 24.1% higher than the 2005-2020 average. Spatially, the remaining snow cover was mainly distributed in the western TPCR and along the Himalayas, where the number of snow cover days (NSCD) exceeded 20. The abnormal distribution in August was similar to that in July, with positive anomalies concentrated in the western TPCR and negative anomalies mainly along the Himalayas and the Nyenchen Tanglha Mountains (Figure 3).

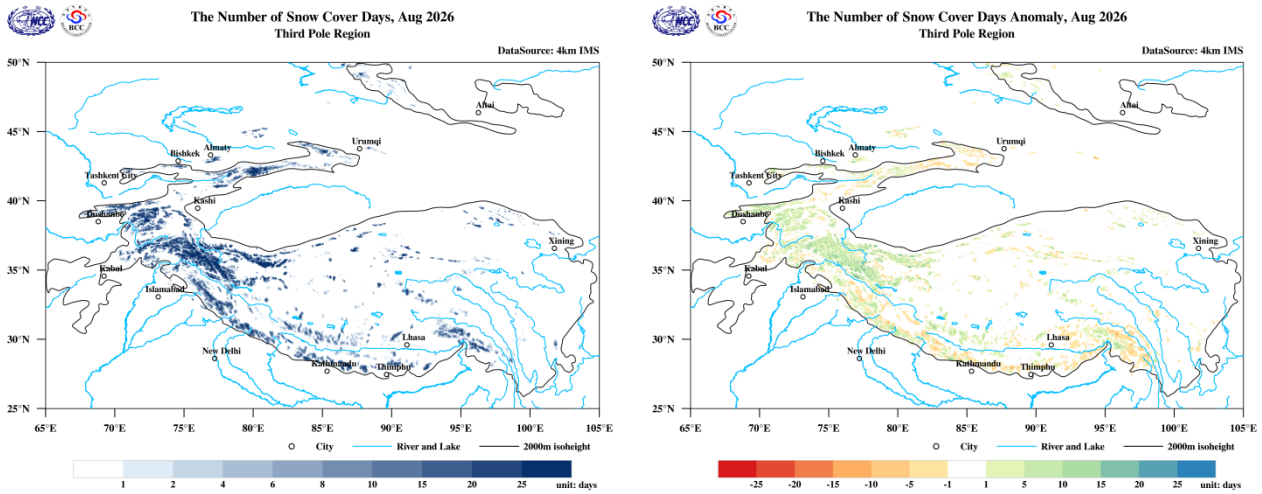


Figure 3 The Number of Snow Cover Days (left) and its anomalies (right, relative to 2005-2020) in August 2026
Data source: IMS/NSIDC

2. High-impact Climate Events

Heavy Rainfall, Flood and Landslide

Between 2 and 8 August, persistent monsoon rainfall and the subsequent flooding struck India. The floods affected large swathes of Assam in northeastern India, impacting 12 districts and 33 revenue circles.

On 3 August, a flash flood hit Nuristan and the Central Region of Afghanistan, damaging 507 houses and resulting in 2 fatalities and 6 injuries.

During the night of 12 August, a severe landslide triggered by persistent rainfall struck the mountainous area in the central-western part of Nepal. A small village of Rolpa District was flattened, and numerous residential houses, livestock sheds, and shops were destroyed. The disaster caused 10 deaths, left 2 people missing, and injured 2 others.

Ice/rock Avalanche and Debris Flow

On the morning of 26 August, a high-altitude ice avalanche in northern Nepal triggered a severe cross-border debris flow disaster that affected the Rasuwa District of northern Nepal and Gyirong Port in Gyirong County, China. As of 7 pm local time on 18 September, 1,410 deaths had been confirmed and 6,055 people remained missing in Nepal, and 43 fatalities and 519 missing people had been reported by China side. According to the preliminary investigation so far, this severe debris flow disaster stemmed from high-altitude glacier/rock collapse in Nepal. A glacier/rock body on the northern slope of Lantang Lirung in Nepal came crashing down at an elevation of approximately 5,200 m and scoured the mountain slope during its descent, which rapidly transformed into a high-speed moving debris flow.

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