WMO Third Pole RCC Network
(In Demonstration Phase)

Monthly Climate Bulletin in the Third Pole Region
October 2026

Issued: 20 November 2026

Highlights

- In October 2026, surface air temperatures (SATs) over the Third Pole (TP) region exhibited a northeast–southwest-oriented "− + −" anomaly pattern. SATs were more than 2°C below normal in parts of the southern TPCR[1] and the northeastern TP region, and more than 4°C above normal in parts of the western TPCR.

- Total precipitation exceeded twice the climatological normal across extensive areas from the northern TPCR to the Tarim Basin and farther east, whereas precipitation was markedly below normal over the eastern TPCR, the western TP, and parts of the southern TP.

- For the month, the snow cover extent (SCE) was 46.8% higher than the 2005-2020 average, ranking as the highest since 2004. Snow cover days were above normal mainly in the middle sections of the Kunlun Mountains and the Himalayas, with anomalies exceeding 25 days in some local areas.

- Flash floods triggered by a landslide dam outburst on the Budhi Gandaki River on 11 October caused severe damage in northern Nepal. A glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) struck Gasa district in northern Bhutan on 29 October, damaging roads, bridges and other public infrastructure.

Editor: **National Climate Centre, China Meteorological Administration**
46 Zhongguancun Nandajie, Haidian District, Beijing, 100081, China
E-mail: wangpl@cma.gov.cn

[1] TPCR refers to the region with elevations 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 October 2026, surface air temperatures (SATs) over the Third Pole (TP) region exhibited a northeast–southwest-oriented "− + −" anomaly pattern. SATs were below normal (1991–2020 climatology) over the central-northern to northeastern TP region, the southern Third Pole core region (TPCR), and the southern TP region south of the Himalayas. In particular, SATs were 2–3°C below normal over the northeastern TP region and parts of the southern TPCR. Above-normal SATs were primarily observed over the western TP region and the western and eastern TPCR, with positive anomalies exceeding 4°C in parts of the western TPCR (Figure 1).

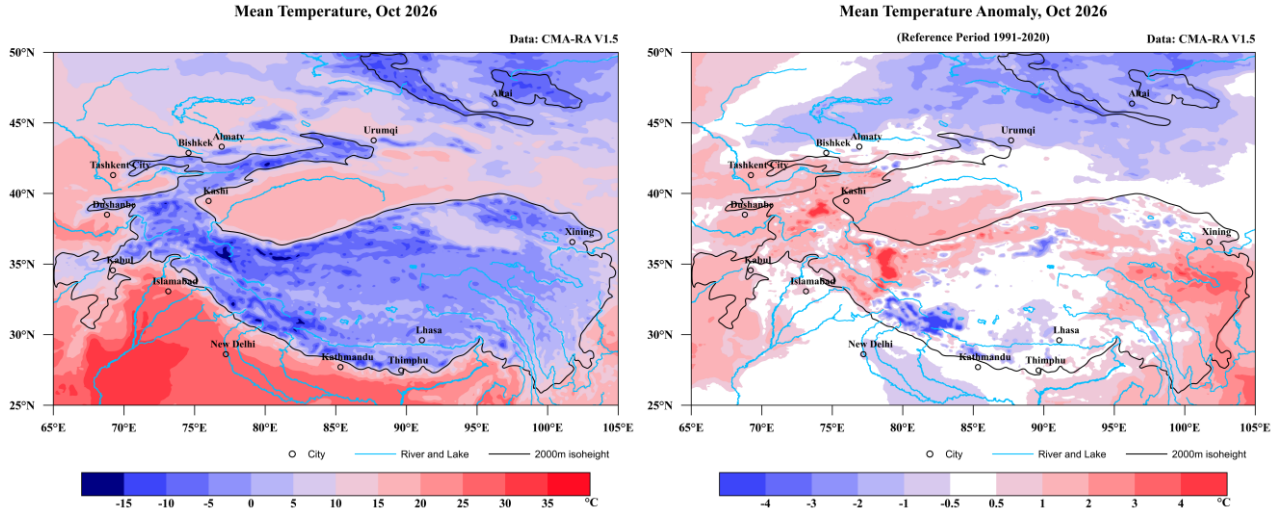


Figure 1. Monthly mean surface air temperature (left) and anomalies (relative to 1991-2020, right) in October 2026.
Data source: CMA-RA V1.5

1.2 Precipitation

In October 2026, the spatial distribution of precipitation anomalies was broadly similar to that in September, except that precipitation over the northern TP region shifted to near- or above-normal. Markedly above-normal precipitation was concentrated over the central and northern TP region, where total precipitation exceeded twice the climatological normal across extensive areas from the northern TPCR to the Tarim Basin and farther east. By contrast, below-normal precipitation prevailed over the eastern TPCR, as well as over the western TP region and parts of the southern TP region, with precipitation deficits exceeding 80% over large areas of the southwestern TP region (Figure 2).

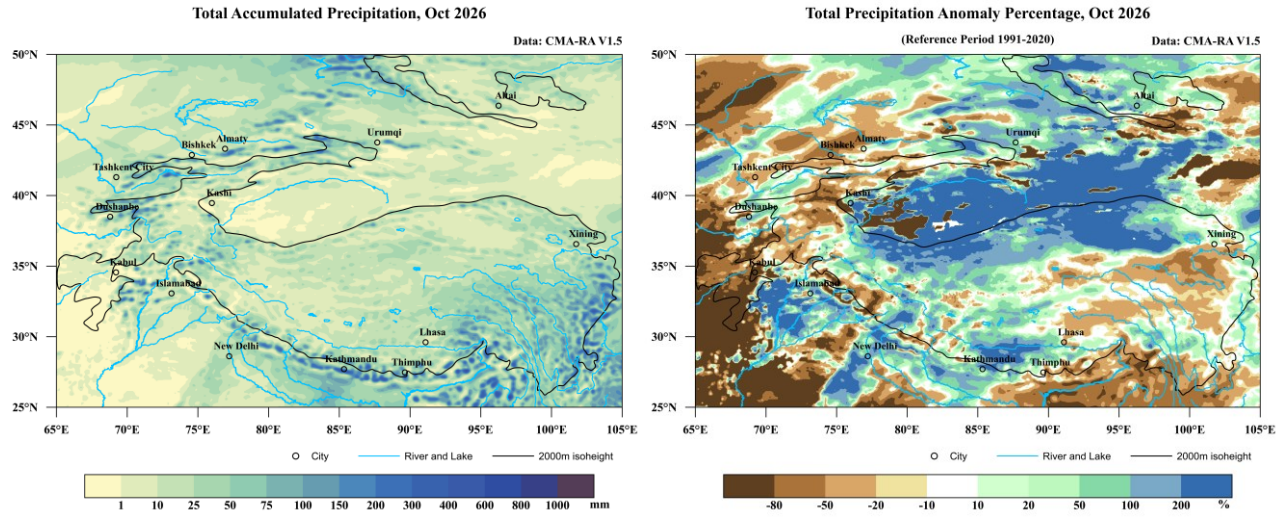


Figure 2. Monthly precipitation totals (left) and anomalies by percentage (right, relative to 1991-2020) in October 2026.
Data source: CMA-RA V1.5

1.3 Snow Cover

In October 2026, snow cover expanded widely across the TPCR and the northern to northeastern TP region compared with September. The snow cover extent (SCE) reached a total area of 1.98×10^6 km^2, 77.3% of which was located within the TPCR. October SCE was 46.8% higher than the 2005-2020 average, ranking as the highest for the month since records began in 2004. Spatially, the distribution of snow cover was similar to that in September, with snow concentrated from the western to central TPCR and extending into the northeastern and southeastern TPCR, as well as the central-northern TP region. The number of snow cover days (NSCD) was more than 20 days higher than normal in the middle sections of the Kunlun Mountains and the Himalayas, with positive anomalies exceeding 25 days in some local areas (Figure 3).

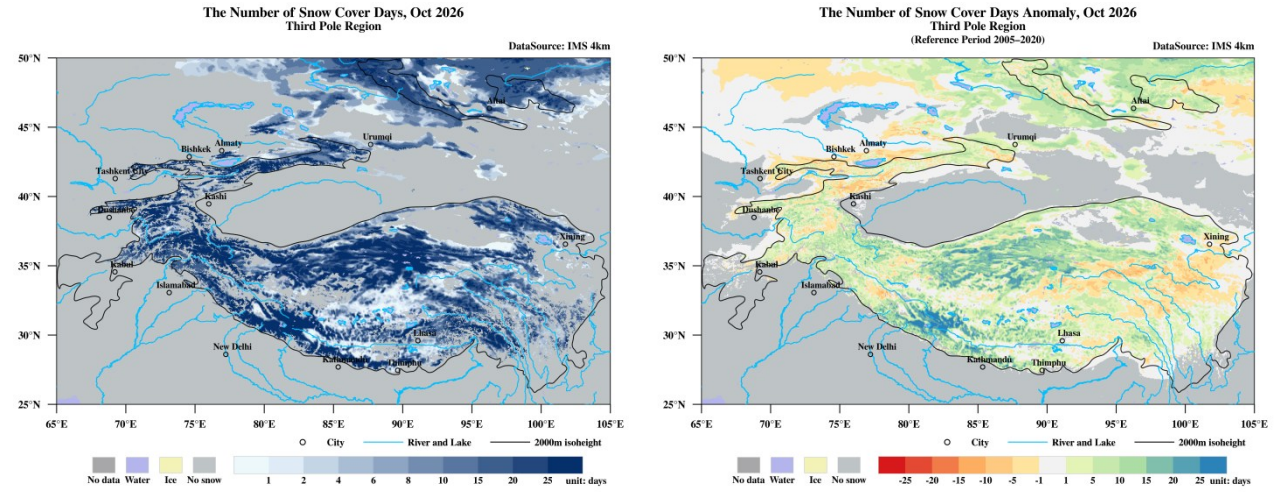


Figure 3 The number of snow cover days (left) and anomalies (right, relative to 2005-2020) in October 2026
Data source: IMS/NSIDC

2. High-impact Climate Events

Floods

On 11 October 2026, flash floods triggered by a landslide dam outburst in the upper Budhi Gandaki River catchment caused severe damage in parts of Gorkha and Dhading districts, northern Nepal, leaving five people missing. The floods swept away two motorable bridges and two suspension bridges, cutting off road access. Three hydropower projects were damaged and more than 550 households were affected. Schools, residences and other critical infrastructure were also damaged.

GLOF

On 29 October 2026, the outburst of Sintaphu Lake in Gasa district, northern Bhutan, triggered a glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) that damaged roads, bridges and public infrastructure in Gasa and Punakha districts, including the Gasa Tshachu hot-spring area and an irrigation scheme in Punakha.

Acknowledgements: We acknowledge contributions from the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services and from other organizations, institutes, or agencies with similar roles for their inputs and feedbacks.