



**WMO Third Pole
RCC Network**
(In Demonstration Phase)



Seasonal Climate Bulletin in the Third Pole Region Spring (MAM) 2026

Issued: 23 June 2026

Highlights

- In boreal spring 2026, most of the Third Pole (TP) region experienced above-normal surface air temperatures (SAT), except for the southern sectors. The Third Pole Core Region (TPCR¹) was predominantly warmer than normal in March, with positive anomalies of 3–4°C over the central-to-western TPCR and localized values exceeding 4°C.
- Spring precipitation across the TP region exhibited a dominant pattern of above-normal in the south and below-normal in the north. Most of the TPCR and the southern TP region received more precipitation, particularly in the southwestern areas, where positive anomalies exceeded 100%.
- The number of snow cover days (NSCD) in March continued the lower-than-normal pattern observed during the previous winter across most of the TP region. However, anomalies in the vast area of TPCR turned positive in April and May, causing the overall snow cover extent (SCE) to exceed the multi-year average by 15.5% and 28.6%, respectively. Both values were the highest since 2004.
- Several high-impact events happened in the region during the spring of 2026. Sand and dust storms struck northern China, Mongolia and India, and resulted in fatalities in northwestern India. Heavy rainfall hit Afghanistan, India and Pakistan, causing severe injuries and damages, while heatwaves in India led to power outage.

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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 1-6.

1. Seasonal Overview

1.1 Temperature

In boreal spring 2026, surface air temperatures (SAT) in most of the Third Pole (TP) region were above the 1991–2020 climatological mean, with the exception of its southern sectors (Figure 1).

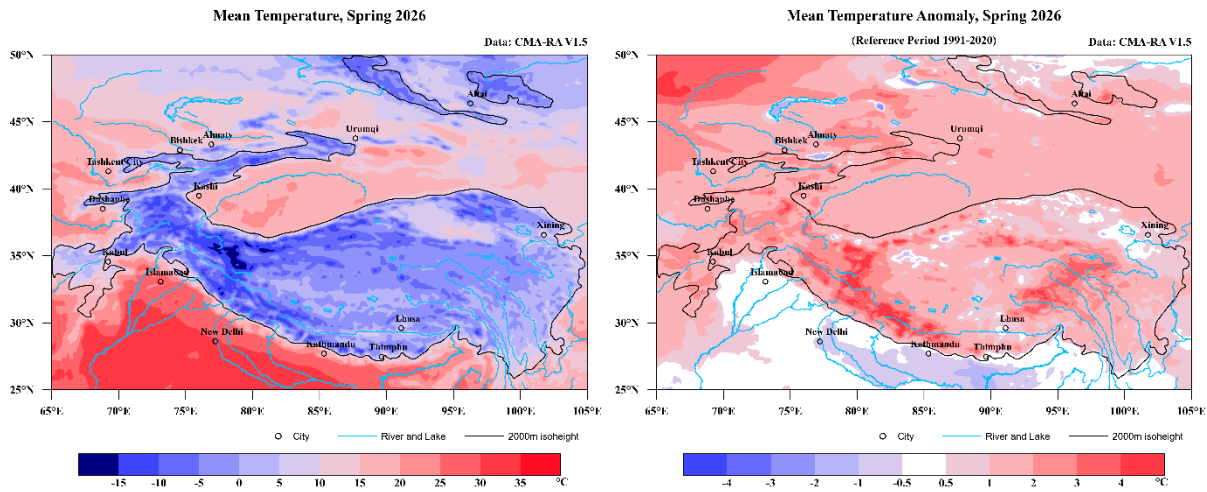


Figure 1 Seasonal mean surface air temperature (left) and anomalies (right, relative to 1991-2020) in spring (MAM) 2026
Data source: CMA-RA V1.5

SAT anomalies over the TP region exhibited distinct monthly patterns during spring 2026. In March, the TPCR was predominantly warmer than normal, with positive anomalies of 3–4°C over its central-to-western parts and localized areas exceeding 4°C. In April, warming persisted across most of the TP except for the southern TP region; anomalies exceeded 3°C in the northwest and 4°C to the west of Lake Balkhash. Conversely, in May, SAT over the central and southern TP exhibited near- to below-normal conditions, with negative anomalies of 1–2 °C dominating the southern sectors, while part of the eastern region and the western and northwestern regions remained above normal, with widespread positive anomalies of 1–2°C (Figure 2).

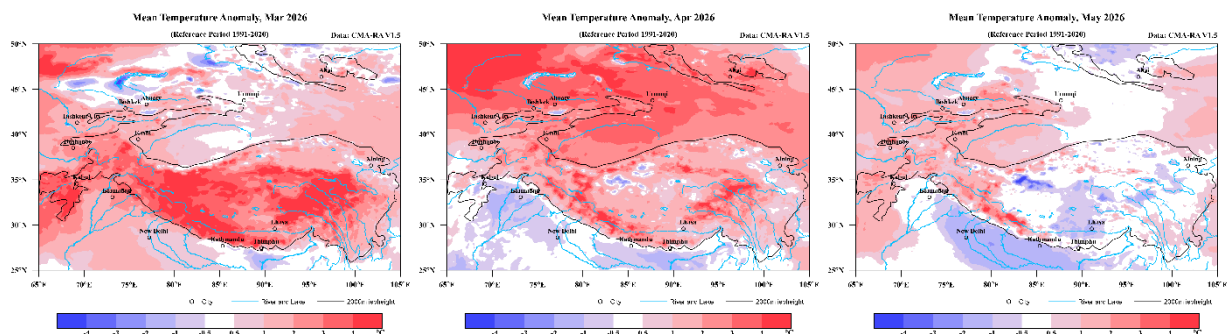


Figure 2 Monthly mean surface air temperature anomalies (relative to 1991-2020) in March (left), April (middle) and May (right) of 2026
Data source: CMA-RA V1.5

1.2 Precipitation

During the boreal spring of 2026, precipitation over the TP region exhibited a dominant pattern of above-normal in the south and below-normal in the north. Most of the TPCR and southern TP region

received more precipitation, particularly in the southwestern areas, where positive anomalies exceeded 100% (Figure 3).

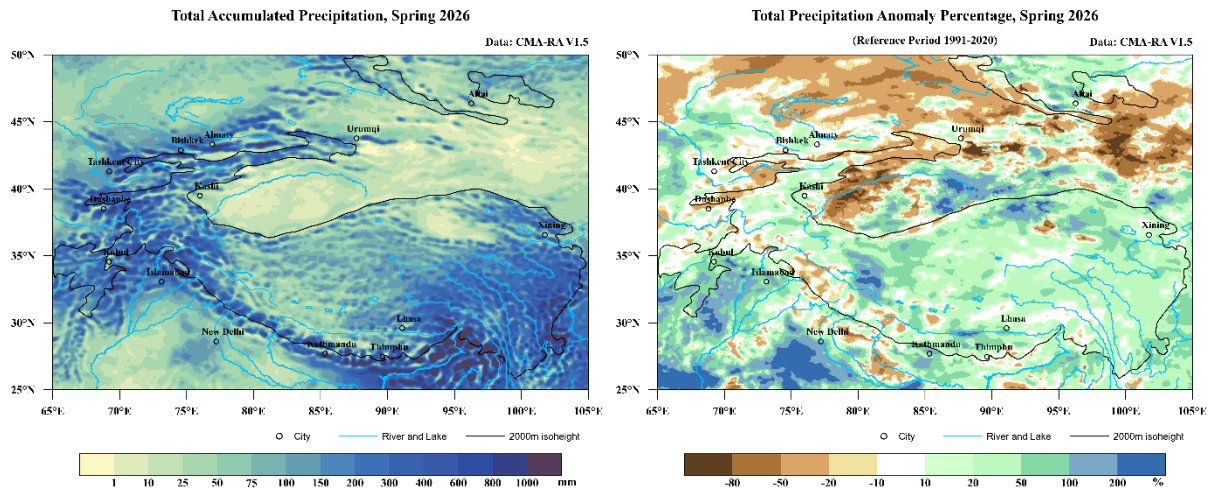


Figure 3 Seasonal precipitation totals (left) and anomalies by percentage (right, relative to 1991-2020) in spring (MAM) 2026
Data source: CMA-RA V1.5

Throughout the season, precipitation in many parts of the northern region remained consistently below normal. By contrast, most of the southern TP experienced above-normal precipitation in March and April, especially in southwestern TP region where a significant deficit was observed in May. In March, precipitation over the southern and southwestern regions, as well as the Tarim Basin, was more than 80% above normal, whereas most northern areas of the TP region received 20-80% less precipitation than normal, with localized deficits exceeding 80%. In April, precipitation across most of the TP region was above normal, with anomalies exceeding 80% in parts of the southwestern TP and the eastern Tarim Basin, while notable precipitation deficits of more than 80% were mainly confined to the northeastern TP and the western Tarim Basin. In May, precipitation was above normal across most of the TPCR, the eastern TP, and the southern TP, and parts of the northwestern region also recorded above-normal values. In contrast, most of the northern TP saw below-normal precipitation, while the southwestern TP experienced a significant deficit, with the negative anomalies exceeding 80% (Figure 4).

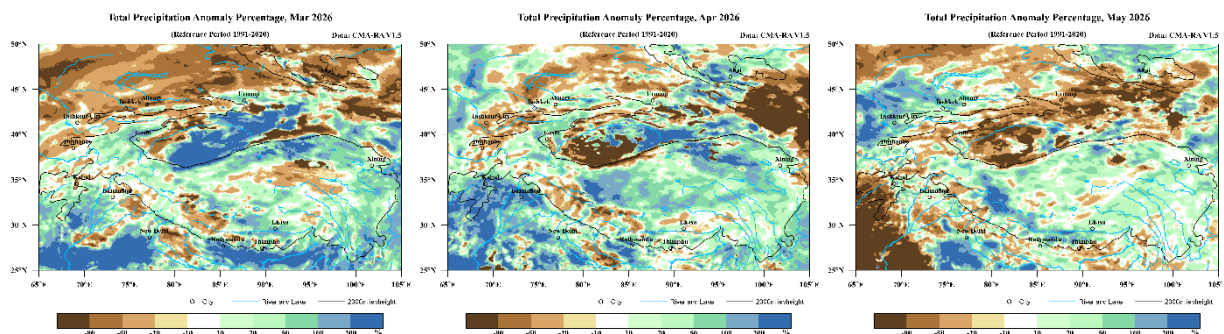


Figure 4 Monthly precipitation anomalies by percentage (relative to 1991-2020) in March (left), April (middle) and May (right) of 2026
Data source: CMA-RA V1.5

1.3 Snow Cover

For the spring of 2026, the snow cover extent (SCE) over the TP region and TPCR were around $2.54 \times 10^6 \text{ km}^2$ and $1.85 \times 10^6 \text{ km}^2$, respectively, which were 1.8% and 8.8% higher than the 2005-2020 average. Spatially, the number of snow cover days (NSCD) remained over 80 days in the western, southern and part of the northern TPCR, while NSCD in most other area remains less than 30 days. The positive anomalies of NSCD occurred mainly along most of the TPCR except for the Gangdise Mountain and Hengduan Mountain. In contrast, the negative anomalies dominated the northern part of the TP region (Figure 5).

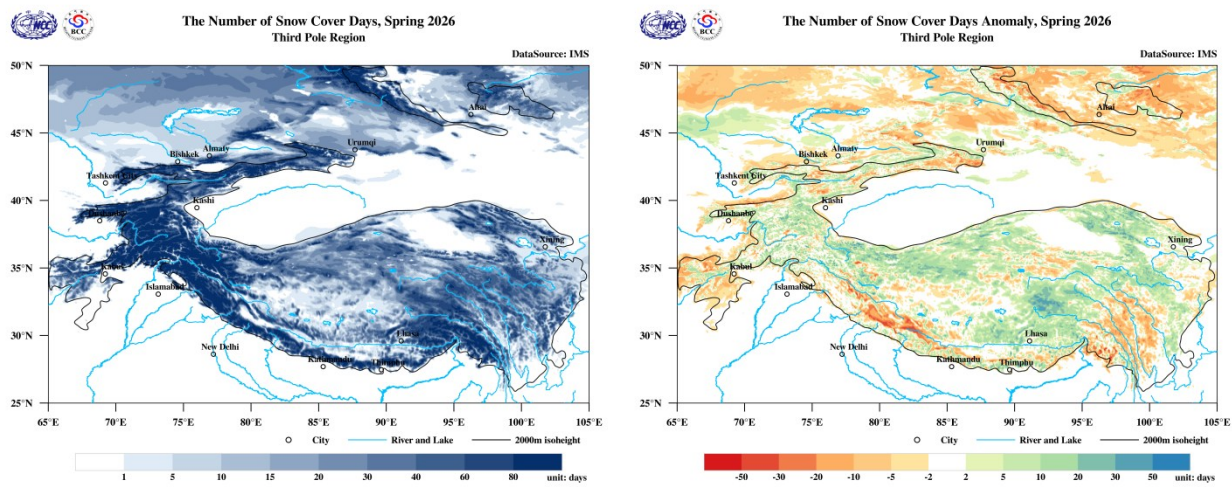


Figure 5 The Number of Snow Cover Days (left) and its anomalies (right, relative to 2005-2020) for the spring (MAM) of 2026
Data source: IMS/NSIDC

Monthly examination exhibits that, in the TP region, SCEs in March, April and May of 2026 were $3.64 \times 10^6 \text{ km}^2$, $2.30 \times 10^6 \text{ km}^2$ and $1.72 \times 10^6 \text{ km}^2$, respectively, with that in May was ranked as the second highest in historical record, around 25.5% higher than the 2005-2020 average. However, in TPCR, the SCEs in April and May both reached the historical highs, exceeding the multi-year average by 15.5% and 28.6%, respectively. Spatially, the NSCD in March continued the lower-than-normal pattern of the previous winter across most of the TP region. However, the anomalies in the vast areas of the TPCR turned into positive in April and May. With the snow cover in the low-altitude areas of the northern TP region vanished gradually in April and May, where the negative anomalies dominated, the overall SCE in the TP region became the second highest in May (Figure 6).

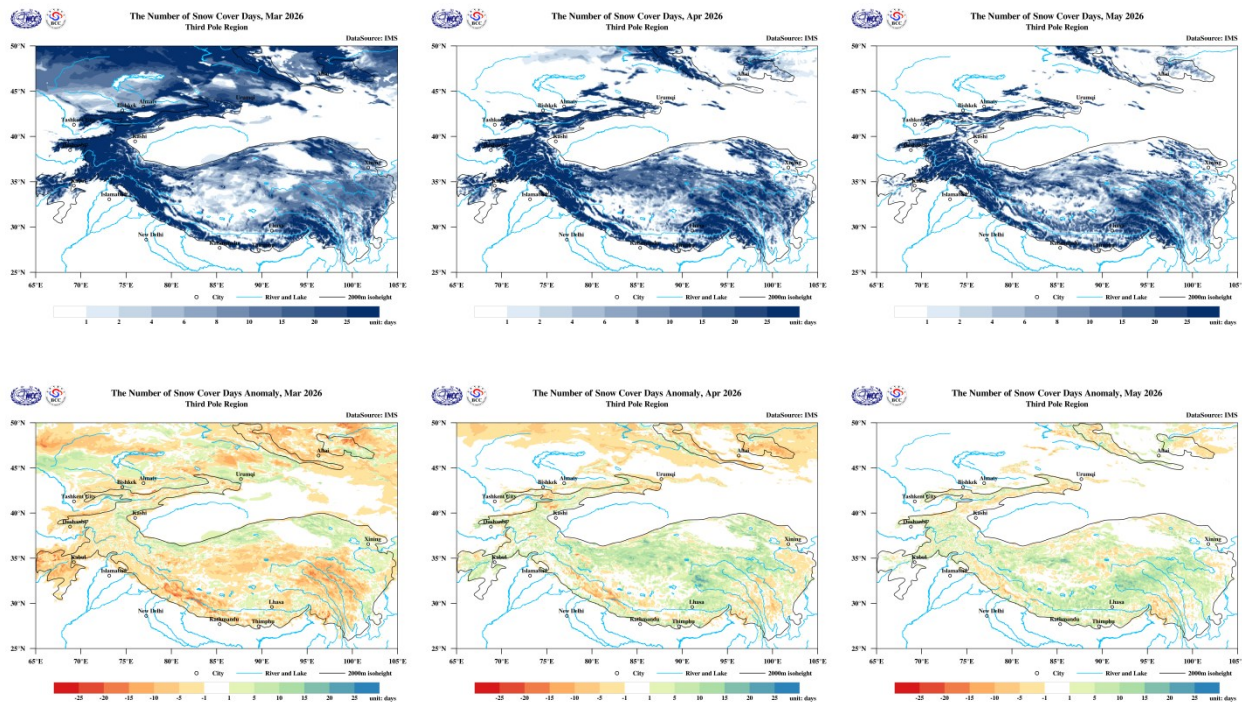


Figure 6 same as Figure 5, but for March (left), April (middle) and May (right) of 2026
Data source: IMS/NSIDC

2. High-impact Climate Events

2.1 Sand and Dust Storm

Northern China and Mongolia experienced 8 sand and dust storm events in the past spring. The intensity of the one during April 17 to 20 reached the level of sandstorm and affected a broad area of northwestern China.

In April 2026, severe dust storms swept across parts of Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh in India, resulting in 4 fatalities.

2.2 Extreme High Temperature

Heat wave conditions prevailed over parts of western and east-central India in March and intensified in April and May, with extreme heatwaves striking the country through these two months. On 28 April, maximum temperatures hit 46°C across many parts of India and New Delhi set a new high-temperature record for April. In May, large areas across northern India were hit by heatwaves. Banda in Uttar Pradesh recorded a peak temperature of 48°C. Electric power demand had soared and reached an all-time high, triggering power outages in many regions and severely disrupting people's daily lives.

Pakistan also experienced extreme high temperature in the past spring. The highest temperature was observed at Shaheed Benazirabad on 27 April 2026, when the maximum temperature reached 47.5°C.

2.3 Heavy Rainfall

Between 26 March and 6 April, heavy rainfall and flash floods struck all eight regions of Afghanistan. As of 13 April, the disaster had caused 161 fatalities, 230 injuries, and left 8 people missing, affecting more than 74,200 individuals. A subsequent episode of extreme heavy rainfall starting from 24 April triggered flash floods in seven provinces. By 8 May, the event had resulted in 16 fatalities and 9 injuries, with nearly 73,300 people affected.

From 25 March to 5 April, heavy rainfall in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of northwestern Pakistan caused at least 45 deaths, 105 injuries, and damaged 442 houses.

India witnessed 79 and 87 heavy rainfall events in March and April, respectively, with the most events concentrating over the northeastern region of the country. On 14 May, a severe storm carrying heavy rain, lightning and hail hit Uttar Pradesh, India, resulting in 111 fatalities and 72 injuries.

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