WMO Third Pole RCC Network
(In Demonstration Phase)

Monthly Climate Bulletin in the Third Pole Region
September 2026

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Highlights

- In September 2026, surface air temperatures (SATs) were above normal across most of the Third Pole (TP) region, while near- to below-normal SATs were mainly observed in the central TPCR[1] and parts of the southern TP.

- Total precipitation was above normal across most of the TPCR, but below normal over the southwestern and southeastern TP regions outside the TPCR, as well as areas north of the Tianshan Mountains, where deficits exceeded 50% over large areas.

- Snow cover extent (SCE) in September 2026 was 29.6% above the 2005-2020 average, ranking as the 3rd highest for the month since records began in 2004. Snow cover days were above normal in the western and central TPCR, while below normal in the mountainous areas north of 40°N.

- Heavy rainfall triggered floods and landslides in northern India and Nepal from 24 to 27 September 2026. A snow avalanche struck Himlung Himal in northern Nepal on 27 September 2026.

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[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 September 2026, surface air temperatures (SATs) were above normal (1991-2020 climatology) across most of the Third Pole (TP) region, with the western part of the Third Pole core region (TPCR) recording positive anomalies exceeding 4°C. Near-normal or below-normal SATs were primarily observed in the central TPCR and the central part of the southern TP region, particularly over the western Ganges Plain, where temperatures were 1–2°C below normal (Figure 1).

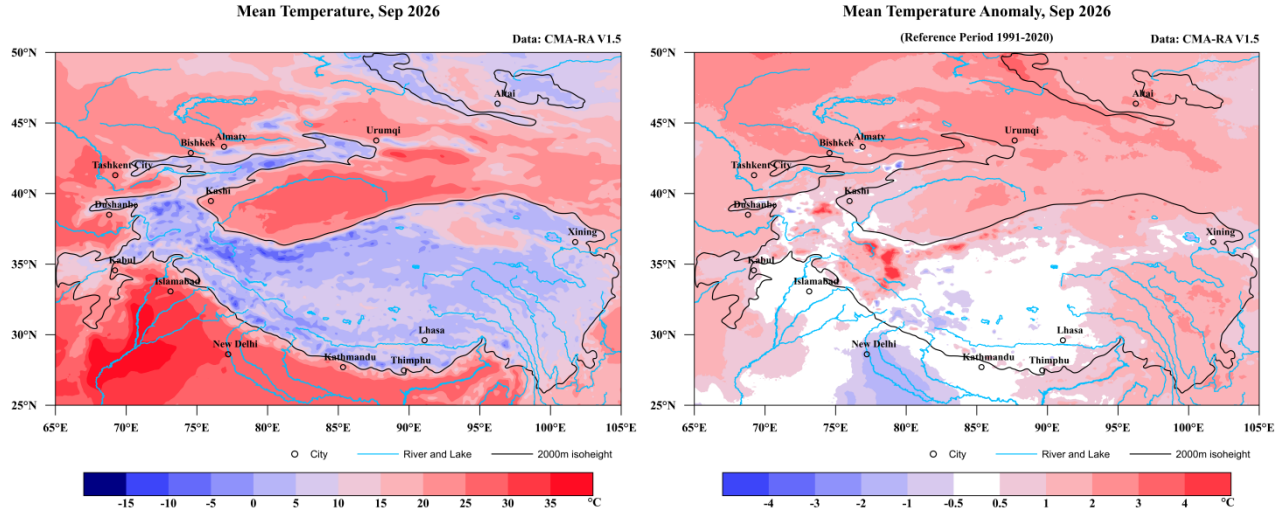


Figure 1. Monthly mean surface air temperature (left) and anomalies (relative to 1991-2020, right) in September 2026.
Data source: CMA-RA V1.5

1.2 Precipitation

In September 2026, precipitation anomalies exhibited marked regional heterogeneity. Total precipitation was above normal across most of the TPCR, particularly in the central TPCR, where total precipitation exceeded twice the climatological normal. In contrast, below-normal precipitation prevailed over the southwestern and southeastern TP regions outside the TPCR, as well as areas north of the Tianshan Mountains, with precipitation deficits exceeding 50% over large areas. In addition, a north-south dipole pattern in precipitation anomaly was observed over the Tarim Basin and its surrounding areas, with above-normal precipitation in the north and below-normal precipitation in the south (Figure 2).

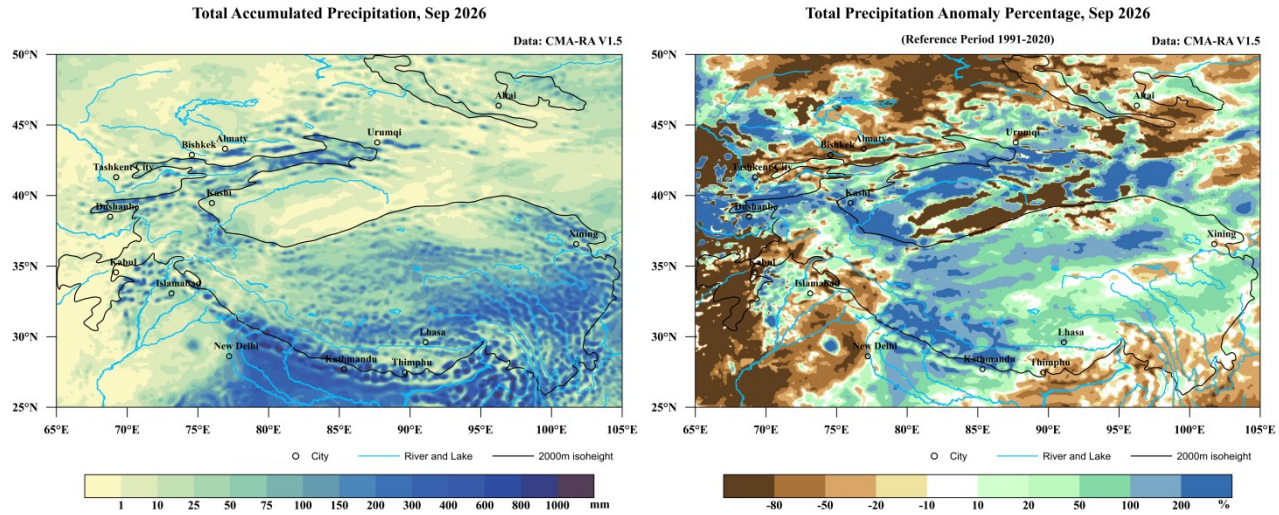


Figure 2. Monthly precipitation totals (left) and anomalies by percentage (right, relative to 1991-2020) in September 2026.
Data source: CMA-RA V1.5

1.3 Snow Cover

At the beginning of the new snow-year, the snow cover extent (SCE) in September increased in the central part of the TP region compared to that in August, covering a total area of 0.53×10^6 km^2, of which 97.2% was located within the TPCR. September SCE was 29.6% above the 2005-2020 average, ranking as the 3rd highest for the month since records began in 2004. Spatially, snow cover was primarily concentrated in the western and central TPCR. The number of snow cover days (NSCD) exceeded 25 in the Pamirs, the western Kunlun Mountains, and the eastern Himalayas. Positive NSCD anomalies prevailed across most of the western and central TPCR, whereas negative anomalies were mainly observed in the mountainous areas north of 40°N, including the Altai, Khangai and Tianshan Mountains (Figure 3).

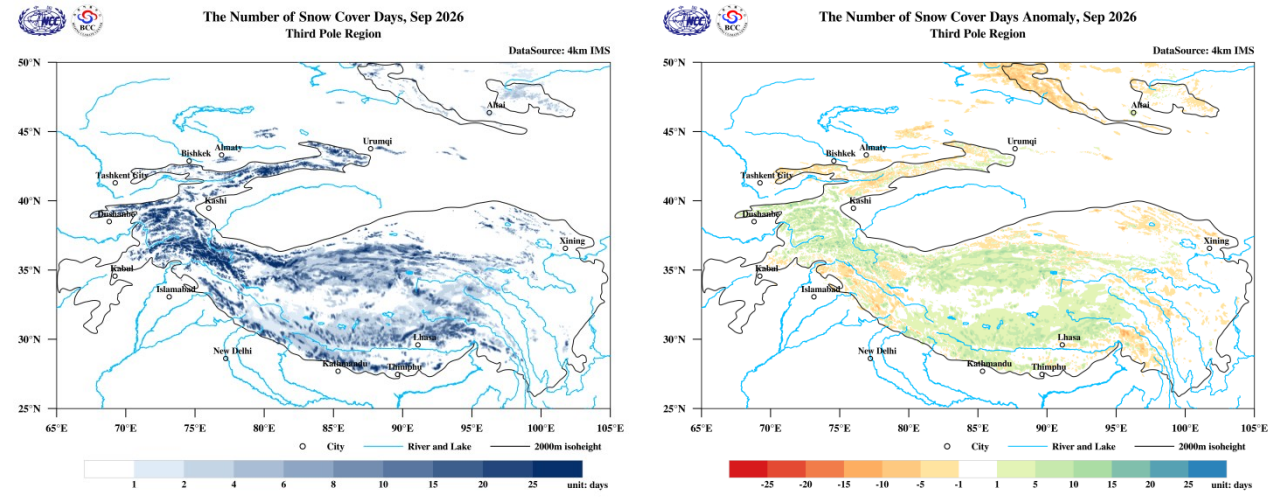


Figure 3. The Number of Snow Cover Days (left) and anomalies (right, relative to 2005-2020) in September 2026.
Data source: IMS/NSIDC

2. High-impact Climate Events

Heavy Rainfall, Floods and Landslides

From 24 to 27 September 2026, heavy rainfall affected northern India and Nepal, triggering floods and landslides that claimed at least 113 lives.

Snow Avalanche

On 27 September 2026, a snow avalanche struck Himlung Himal in northern Nepal. As of 28 September 2026, four people had been confirmed dead and 12 others remained missing.

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