Third Pole Climate Forum

Climate Review in the Third Pole region For December 2025—May 2026

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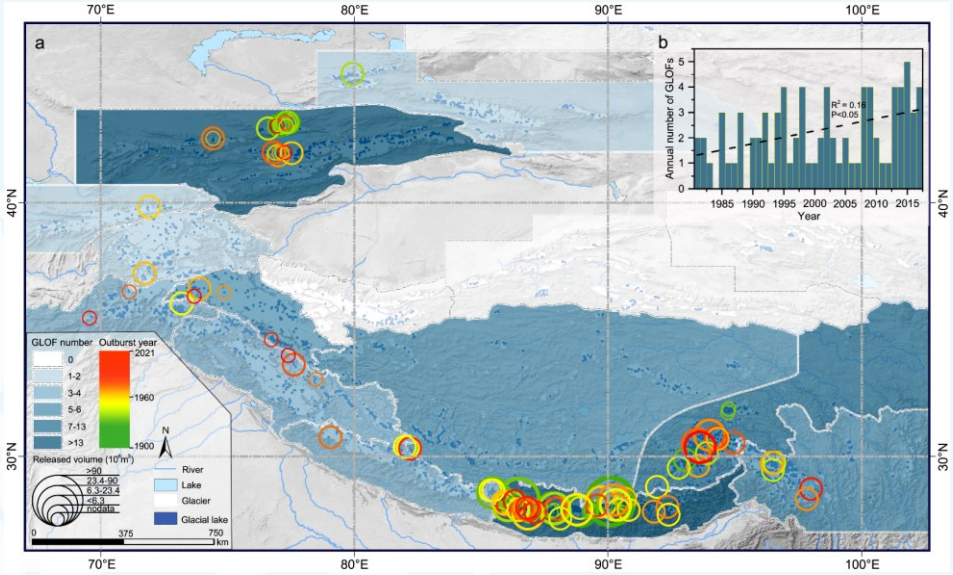
Development on Function of Climate Monitoring

- **development of mandatory Climate Monitoring products coordinated by NCC/CMA**
  - monthly/seasonal/annual monitoring and climate normal products
    - ☑ Temperature
    - ☑ Precipitation
    - ☑ Snow cover
    - ☑ Glacier
    - ☑ Freezing level height
  - Seasonal Climate Bulletin (climate events included)
  - Cryosphere Disasters products
    - ☑ Glacial lake distribution and changes
    - ☑ Glacial lake hazard assessment, regional potential GLOF inundation area, and GLOF probability
    - ☑ GLOF exposure, risk, and regional potential disaster intensity
    - ☑ Distributions of 145 GLOFs in the Third Pole since 1900

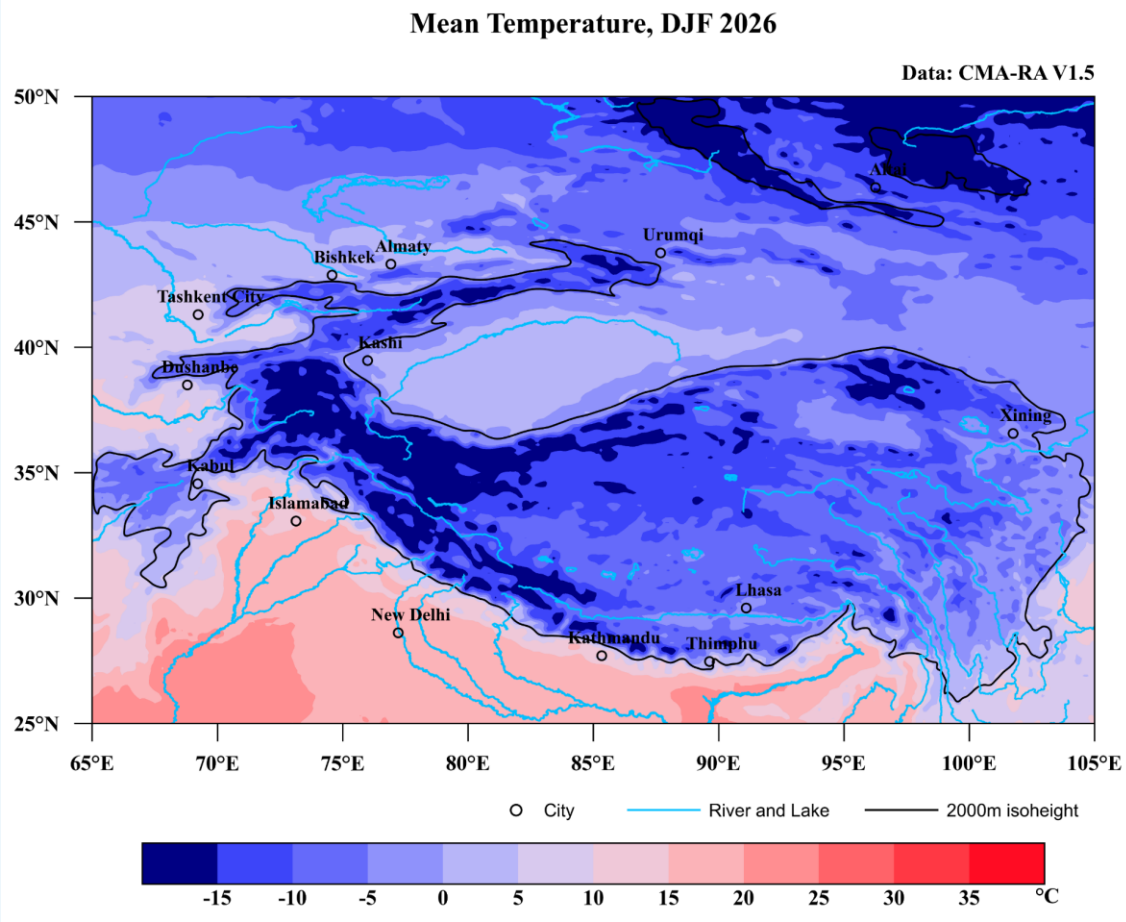


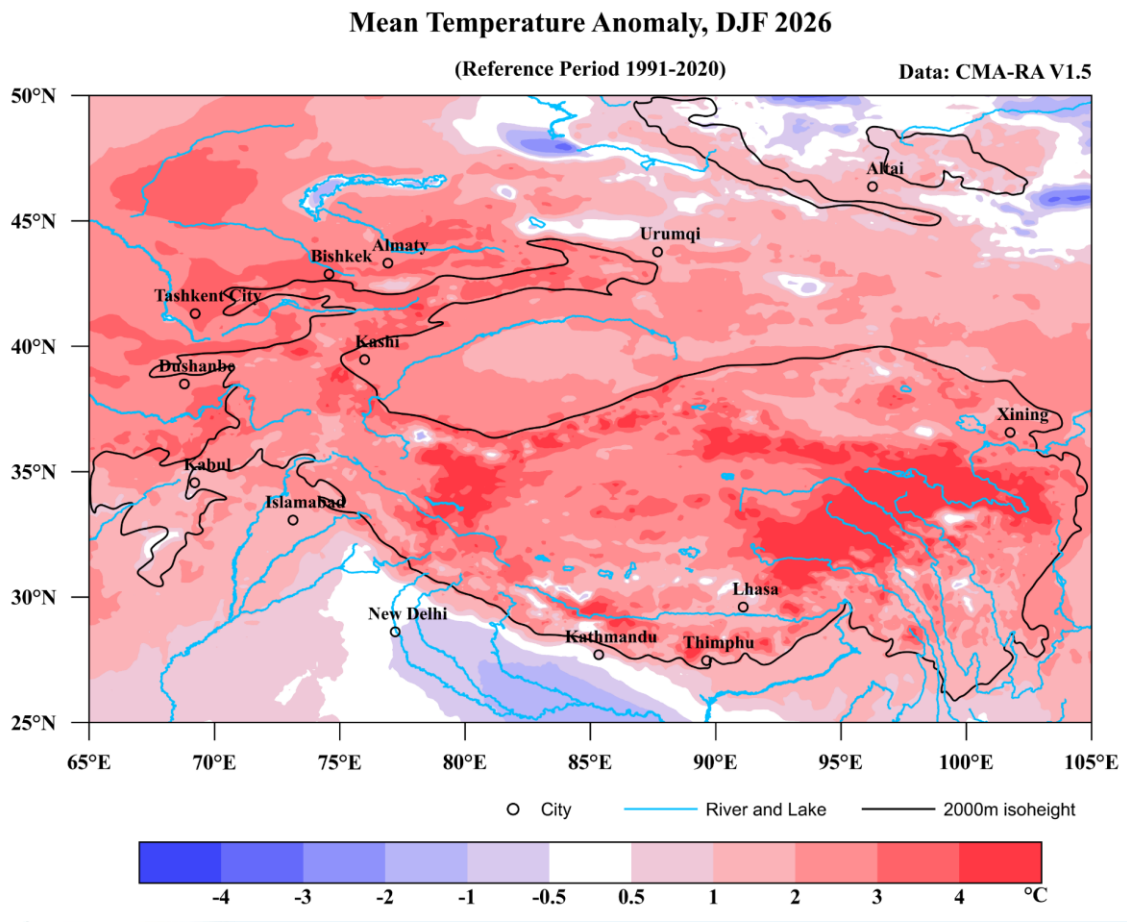
Spatial and temporal distributions of 145 GLOFs in the TP since 1900

- **More functions of the Network web portal (www.rccra2.org/tp-rcc/) are under development**

Surface air temperature: winter (DJF) 2025/2026

- In the boreal winter 2025/2026, most areas of the TP region experienced above-normal surface air temperatures (SAT) relative to the 1991–2020 average. Pronounced positive anomalies were observed over the TPCR, with SAT exceeding the normal by more than 4 ℃ in some areas. In contrast, parts of the northeastern and southwestern TP region recorded below-normal SAT.

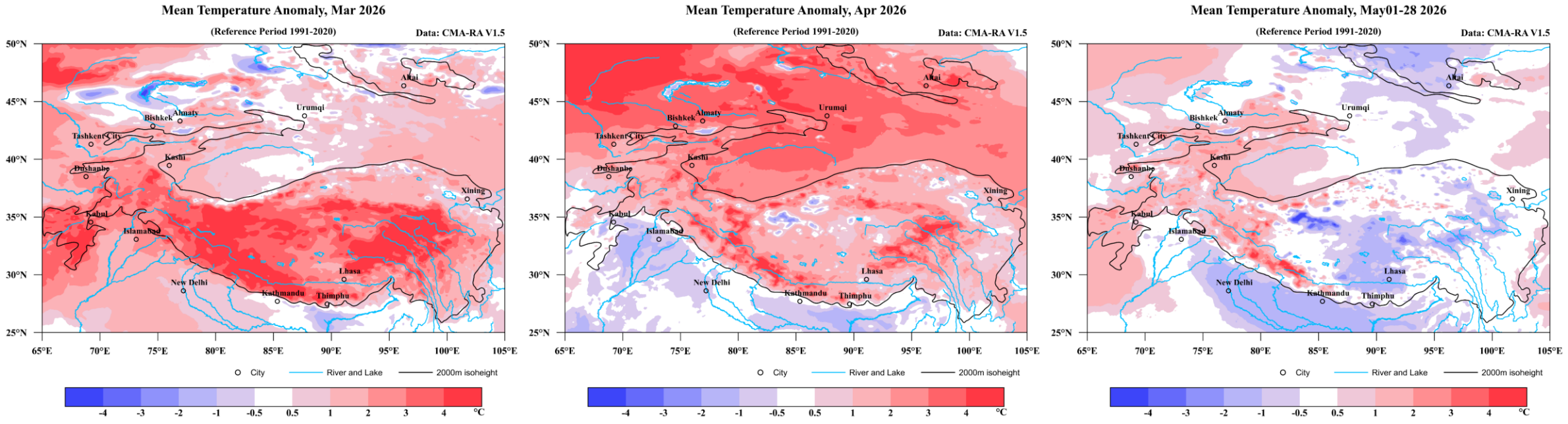




Data source: CMA-RA v1.5

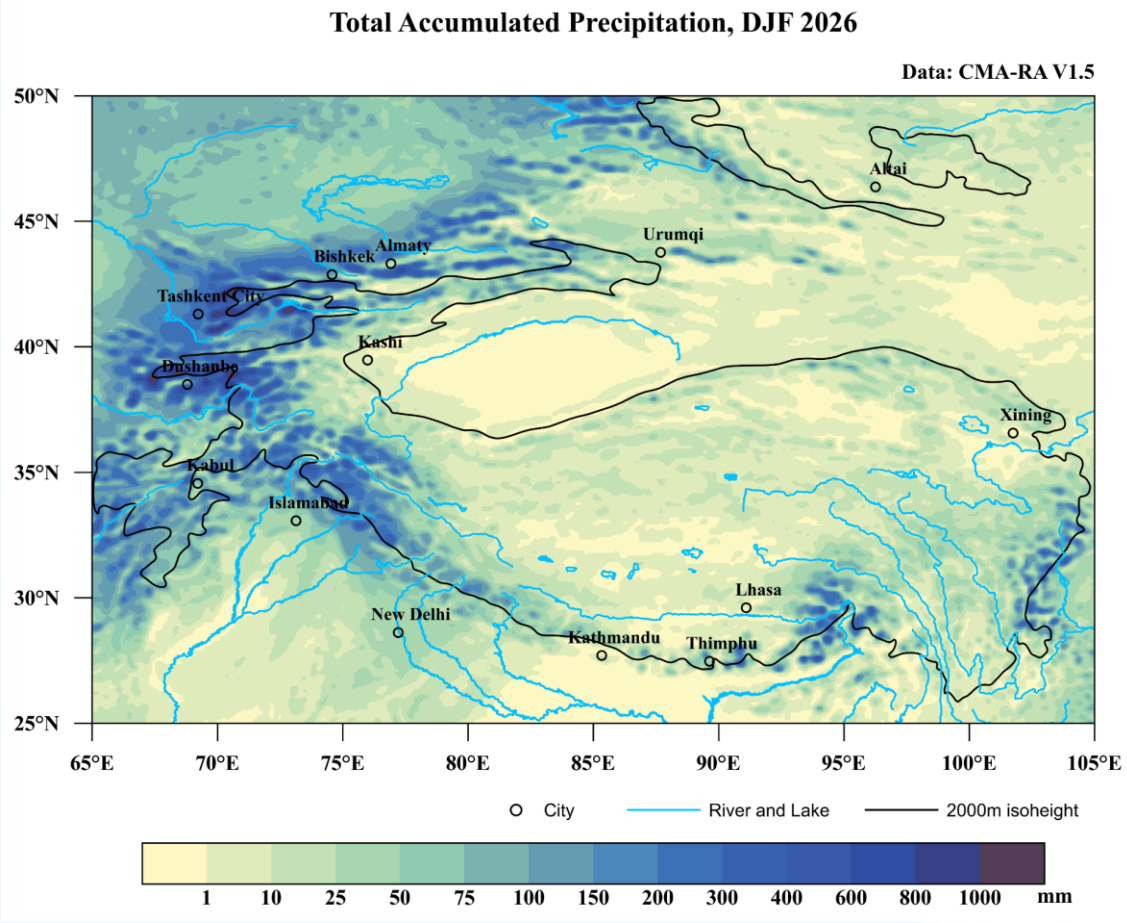
Surface air temperature: Mar to May(01-28) 2026

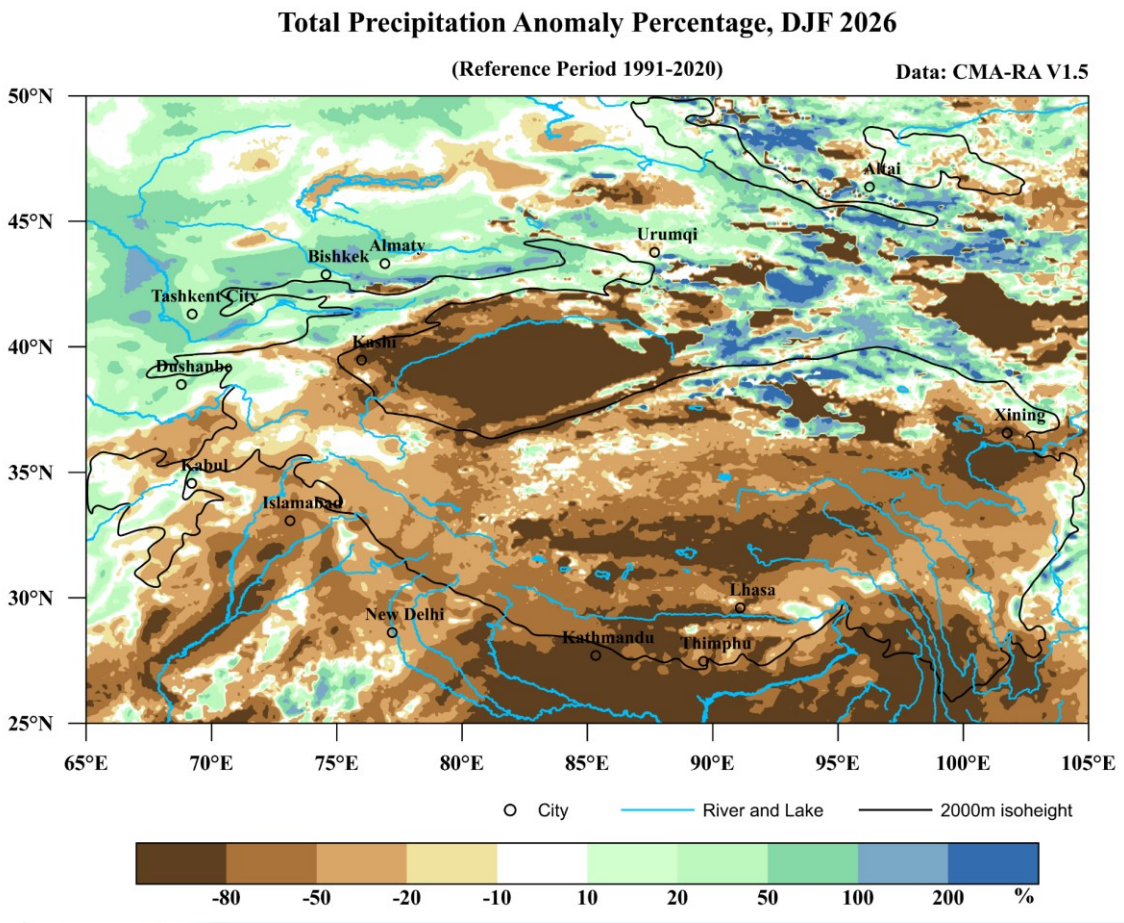
- In March, most of the TPCR experienced obvious warmer-than-normal conditions. Notably, positive anomalies of 3–4 ℃ were recorded over the northwestern TP region and the vast areas from the central to the western TPCR, with several local areas exceeding 4 ℃.
- In April, temperatures across the vast majority of the TP region were above normal, except for the region south to TPCR. Temperature anomalies over the northwestern TP region were more than 3 ℃, while most areas west of Lake Balkhash exceeded 4 ℃.
- In May, temperatures in most of TPCR is lower than normal. Several local areas on the southwestern edge have exceeded 4 ℃.



Precipitation: winter (DJF) 2025/2026

- During the boreal winter of 2025/2026, precipitation anomalies over the TP region exhibited a dominantly positive pattern in the north and negative pattern in the south. Most of the southern TP region experienced a precipitation deficit of 20%-50%, while severe precipitation deficits of over 80% were observed over the southern edge and parts of eastern TP region.

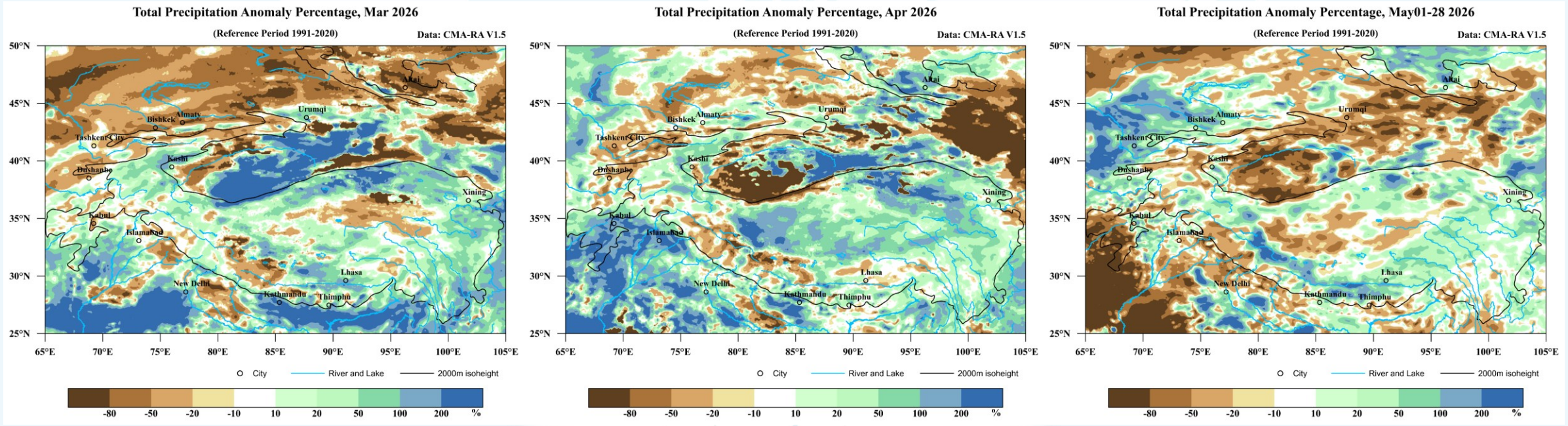




Data source: CMA-RA v1.5

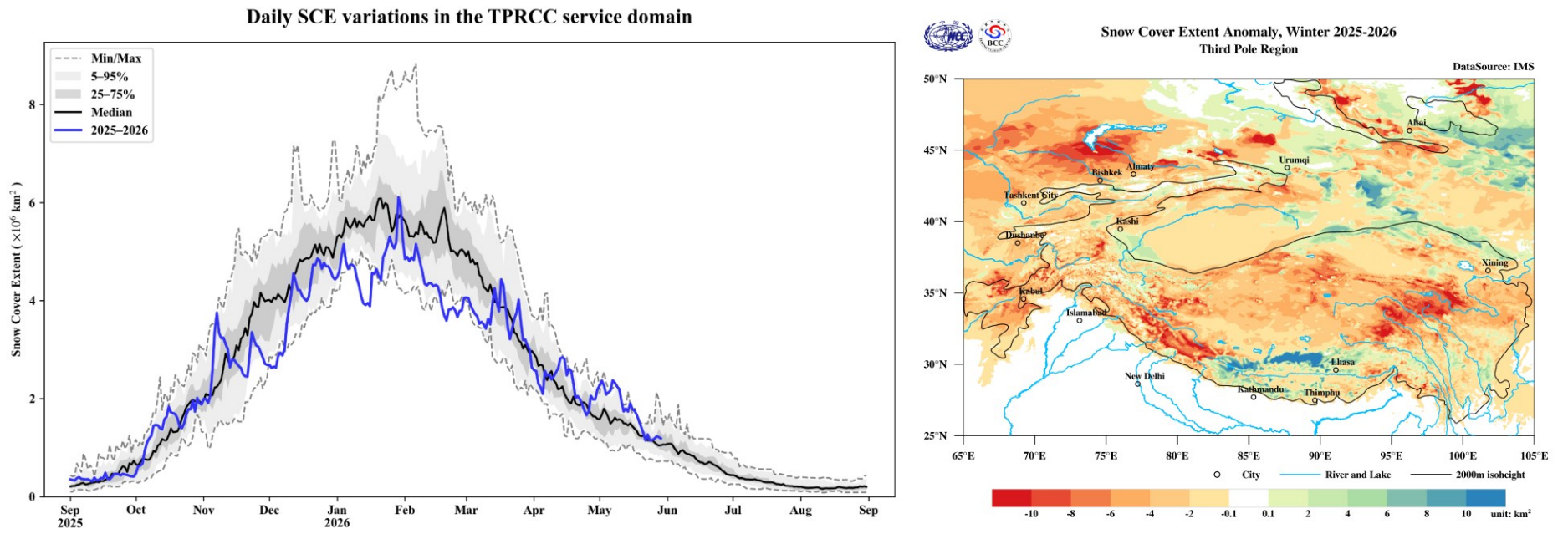
Precipitation: Mar to May(01-28) 2026

- In March, the precipitation pattern was almost opposite of that in winter. Specifically, 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% to 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 region and the eastern Tarim Basin. Notable precipitation deficits of more than 80% confined mainly in the northeastern TP and the western Tarim Basin.
- In May, precipitation deficits of more than 80% confined mainly in the southwestern regions and the Tarim Basin.



Snow Cover: cold season (Dec. to Apr.) 2025/2026

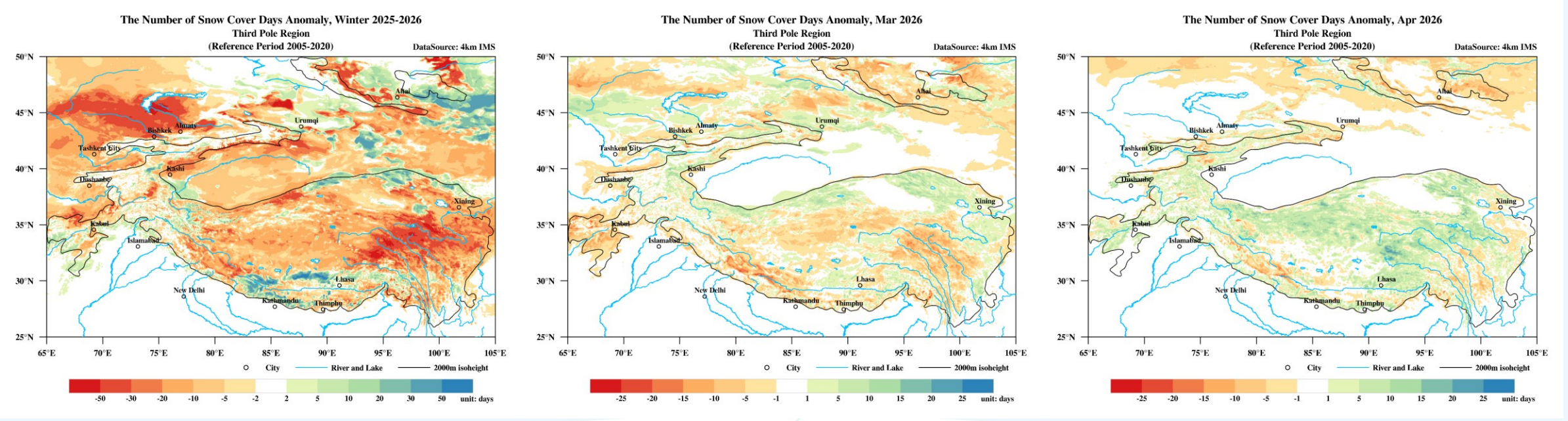
- **Over the past 22 cold seasons (Dec. to Apr.), there is no significant linear trend for mean snow cover extent (SCE) in the TP region, though with obvious inter-annual fluctuation. Daily SCE in the region remained almost consistently lower than the median from late November 2025 to middle March 2026, with some days in January and February breaking the historical record for the lowest. This resulted in the mean SCE of 3.43×10^6 km^2 in the cold season of 2025-2026, around 9.3% lower than the 2005-2020 average, ranking the fourth lowest. For the winter of 2025/2026, the mean SCE was 16.5% lower than the 2005-2020 average, ranking the lowest since 2005, while it exhibited a 7.7% decrease and a 5.1% increase from the multi-year average, respectively, for March and April 2026.**



Data source: IMS

Snow Cover: cold season (Dec. to Apr.) 2025/2026

- **Spatially, the number of snow cover days (NSCD) in the past winter was much lower than the 2005-2020 average across most areas of the TP region, with over 20 days less than normal in part of the eastern TPCR and in the middle of the western TP region. In contrast, positive anomalies were only observed in limited areas of the northeastern and southern TPCR. Compared with the winter, the negative anomalies of NSCD in March were discontinuously distributed across the region, with a decrease of 5 to 15 days from the multi-year average. However, the pattern in April was completely different. Positive anomalies dominated most areas of the TPCR, except for the western Himalayas and the southeastern TPCR. On the contrary, negative anomalies dominated most areas of the northern TP region.**



Conclusion

- In the winter (DJF 2025/2026), most of the TPCR experienced higher air temperature, parts of the northeastern and southwestern TP region were colder than normal.
- During winter, the TP region experienced above-normal precipitation in the north and below-normal precipitation in the south. After winter, this pattern shifted, with above-normal precipitation becoming dominant in the south, particularly over the southwestern TP region, while below normal precipitation in the north, northeast of the region.
- Far below normal snow cover in winter, and the negative pattern persists until March. In April, positive anomalies dominated most TPCR.


Thanks