Western and southern regions have experienced above-average precipitation since October 1, 2025, while all other areas observed below-average precipitation

Key Messages

- Cumulative precipitation from October 1 through December 20, 2025, shows a contrast across the country. The west and southwest are experiencing above-average conditions. However, below-average cumulative precipitation deficits continue across the rest of the country, with severe deficits (less than 30 percent of average) noted in isolated central and southeastern areas..
- Snow water equivalent (SWE) is below average in all basins, with the exception of the Bala Murghab_Kushk and Hari Rod basin. As of the reporting date, Snow Water Volumes (SWV) are below-normal or near record lows, except in the Hari Rod, Bala Murghab_Kushk, and Shirin Tagab basins.
- Weak **La Niña** conditions are expected during December 2025 -February 2026, to be followed by ENSO-neutral conditions (68% chance). There is a 70% to 85% likelihood that ENSO-neutral conditions will persist through summer 2026.
- For the period ending January 5, 2026, above-average cumulative precipitation since October 1, 2025, is forecast for parts of the country in the west, southwest, and east. The rest of the country is forecast to realize below-average precipitation.
- Forecasts for January-March and March-May 2026 do not indicate any tilt in the odds to above- or below-average precipitation . For the same three-month seasons, above-average temperatures are forecast. The forecast for above average temperatures may lead to less-than-average SWV accumulations during winter due to precipitation occurring as rain instead of snow, rapid snowmelt runoff, and earlier-than-normal melt out such as has been observed during recent years.
- As per field informants, irrigated winter wheat planting progress has been steady with the support of ground and surface water. However, rainfed winter wheat planting has been significantly reduced due to below-average cumulative precipitation conditions from the beginning of the 2025/26 wet season.
- Increased spring wheat sowing is likely by the end of March 2026 as average precipitation conditions are expected from March 2026 onwards. This is expected to compensate for the shortfalls in winter wheat planted areas in some parts of the country.

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Update on Seasonal Progress

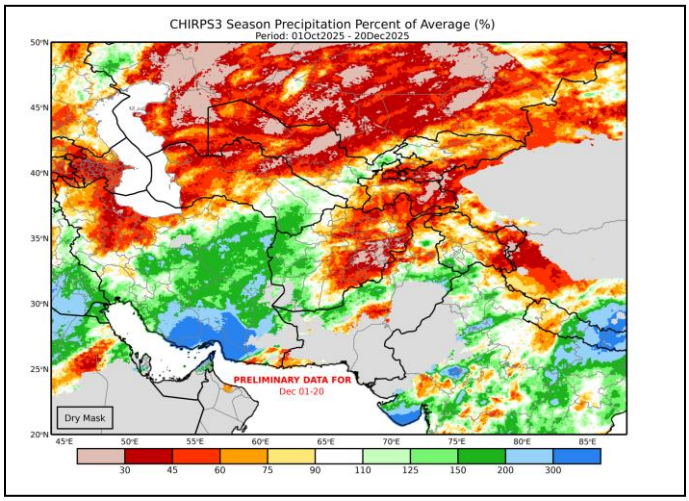
Above-average cumulative precipitation (October 1, 2025 – December 20, 2025) is currently seen in western, southwestern, and eastern parts of the country, while below-average cumulative precipitation persists in the rest of the country. Below-normal SWE and SWV levels are seen in all basins except in Hari Rod, Bala Murghab_Kushk and Shirin Tagab. Progress of irrigated wheat planting is close to normal through mid-December as it has been supported by ground and surface water resources. However, rainfed wheat planting progress is reported to be significantly below normal due to adverse precipitation and soil moisture conditions that prevailed through mid-December.

Precipitation

Above average cumulative precipitation (October 1, 2025 – December 20, 2025), on the order of 110 to 150 percent of average, are currently observed in Badghis, Herat, Farah, Ghor, Nimroz, and parts of Helmand while deficits of 45-75 percent of average were seen in the rest of the country. Severe cumulative precipitation deficits (30 percent of average and less) may also be seen in some isolated parts in Paktika, Paktya, Wardak, and Ghazni (Figure 1).

Figure 1

CHIRPS seasonal precipitation percent of average (%)
October 1, 2025 – December 20, 2025

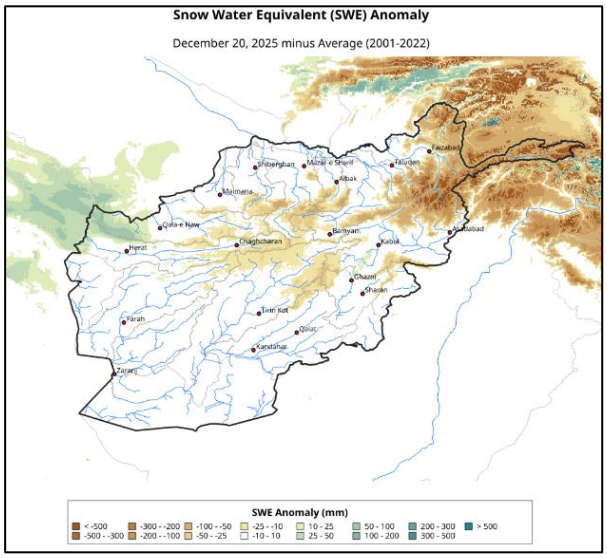


Light green to blue colors shows cumulative precipitation percent above normal while light brown to red colors shows percent of average below normal.

Source: UCSB CHC

Figure 2

Snow water equivalent anomaly (mm)
October 1, 2025 – December 20, 2025



As of December 20, 2025

Source: USGS NASA

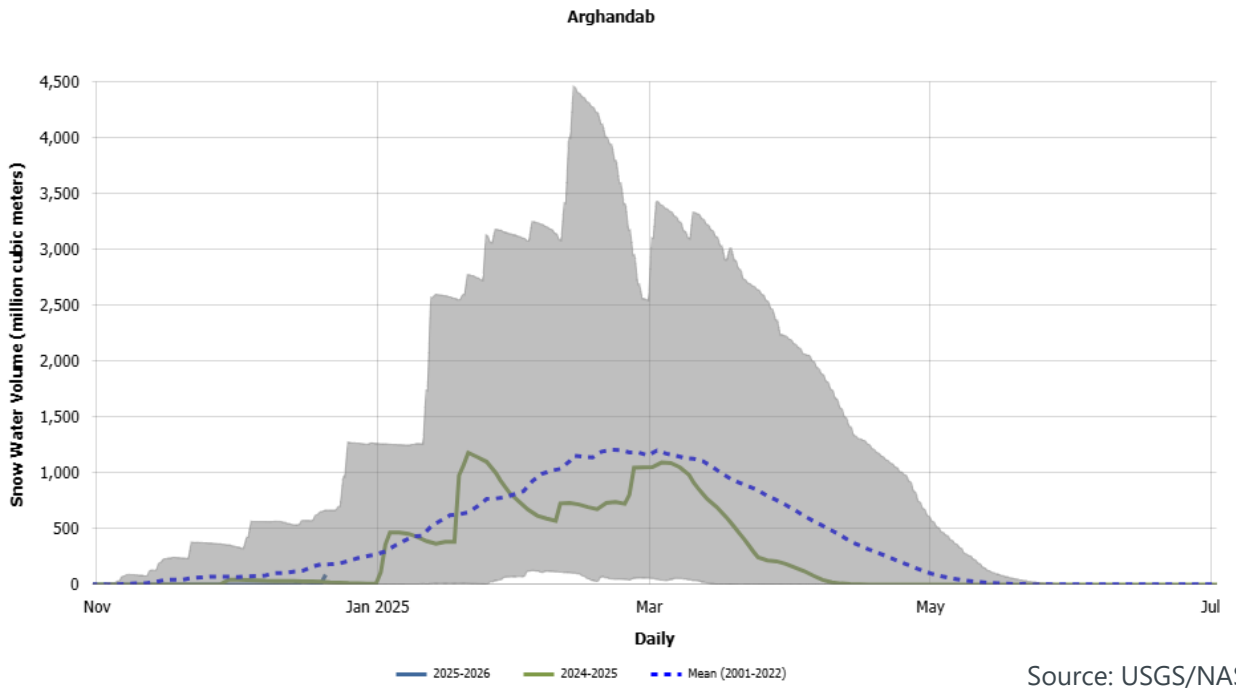
Snow water volume

Below-average SWE conditions are seen in mid-December over most areas in the country for the fifth year in a row. Currently, above average SWE conditions exist only in part of the Bala Murghab_Kushk Hari Rod basin, while below-average SWE conditions persist in the rest of the country (Figure 2).

Early season snow water volumes are currently at near record minimums in all basins except for average levels seen in Hari Rod, Bala Murghab_Kushk, Shirin Tagab, and Sari Pul basins. Figure 3 (insets) highlight the varying SWV levels in different basins in the country – record minimum in Panj (northeast) and Kunduz (north), near-normal in Arghandab (south), and normal in Hari Rod (west) basins as of December 20, 2025.

Figure 3a

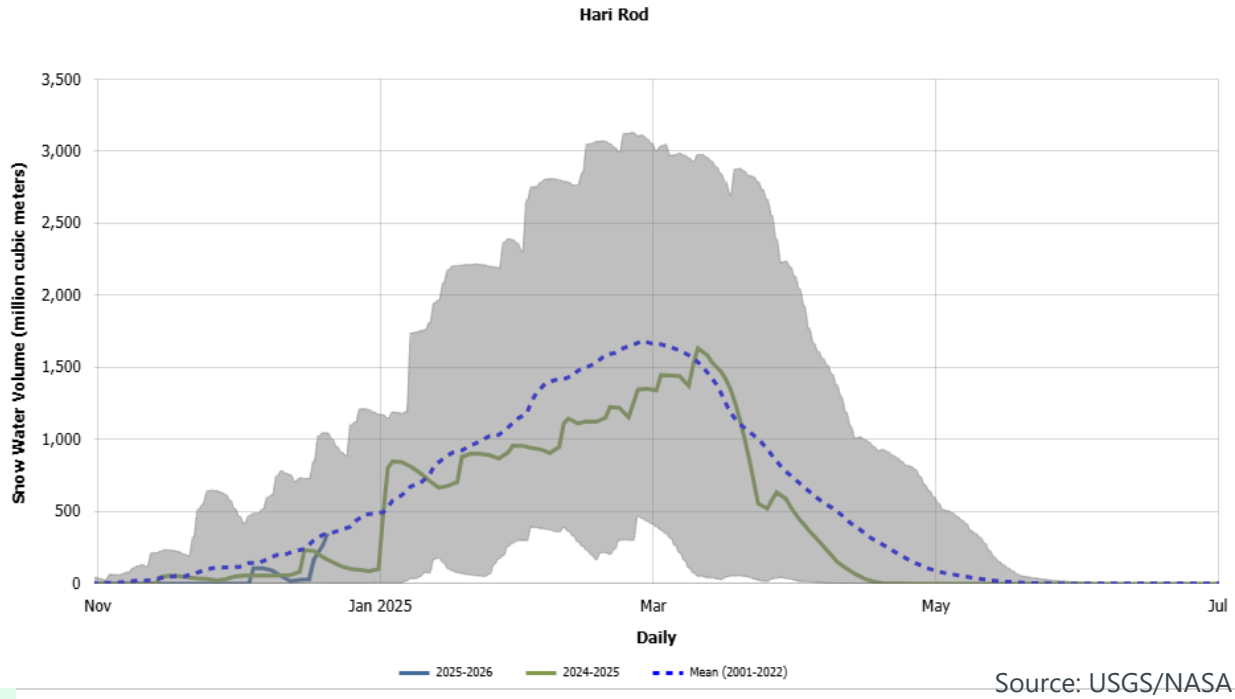
Seasonal snow water volume in 2024-25 (green line), 2025-26 (blue line, barely invisible), and historical average (blue dotted line) as a function of time in Arghandab (south) basin as of December 20, 2025



Source: USGS/NASA

Figure 3b

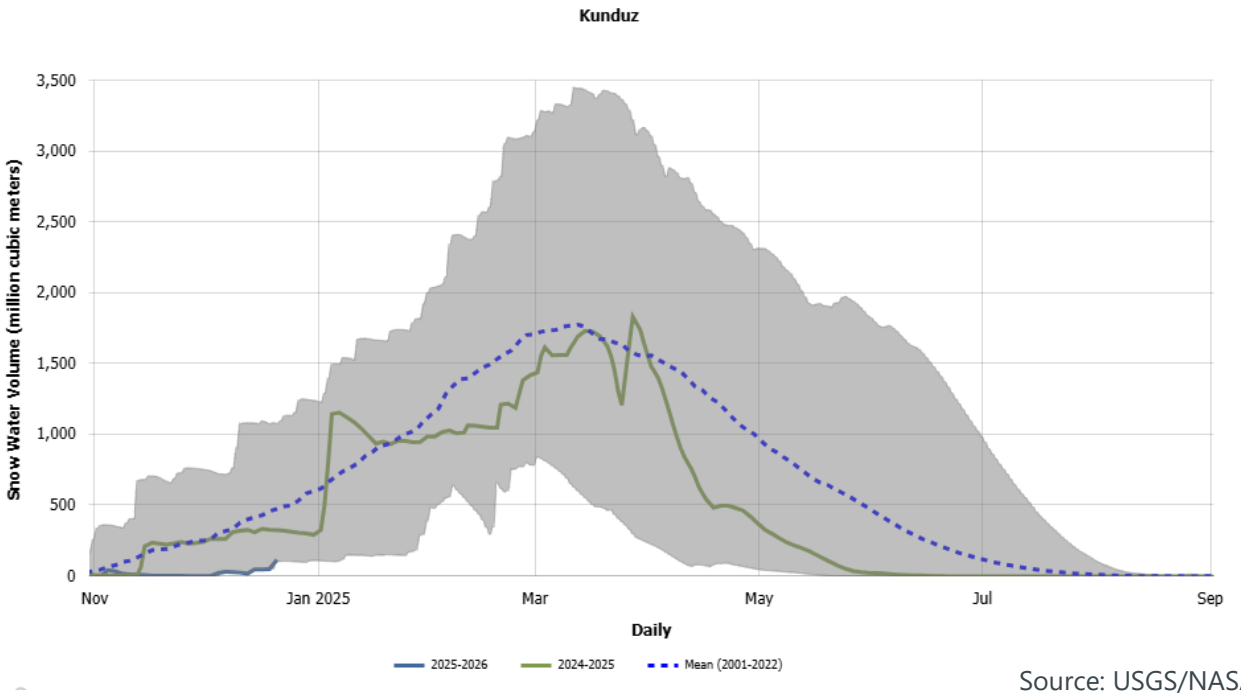
Seasonal snow water volume in 2024-25 (green line), 2025-26 (blue line), and historical average (blue dotted line) as a function of time in Hari Rod (west) basin as of December 20, 2025



Source: USGS/NASA

Figure 3c

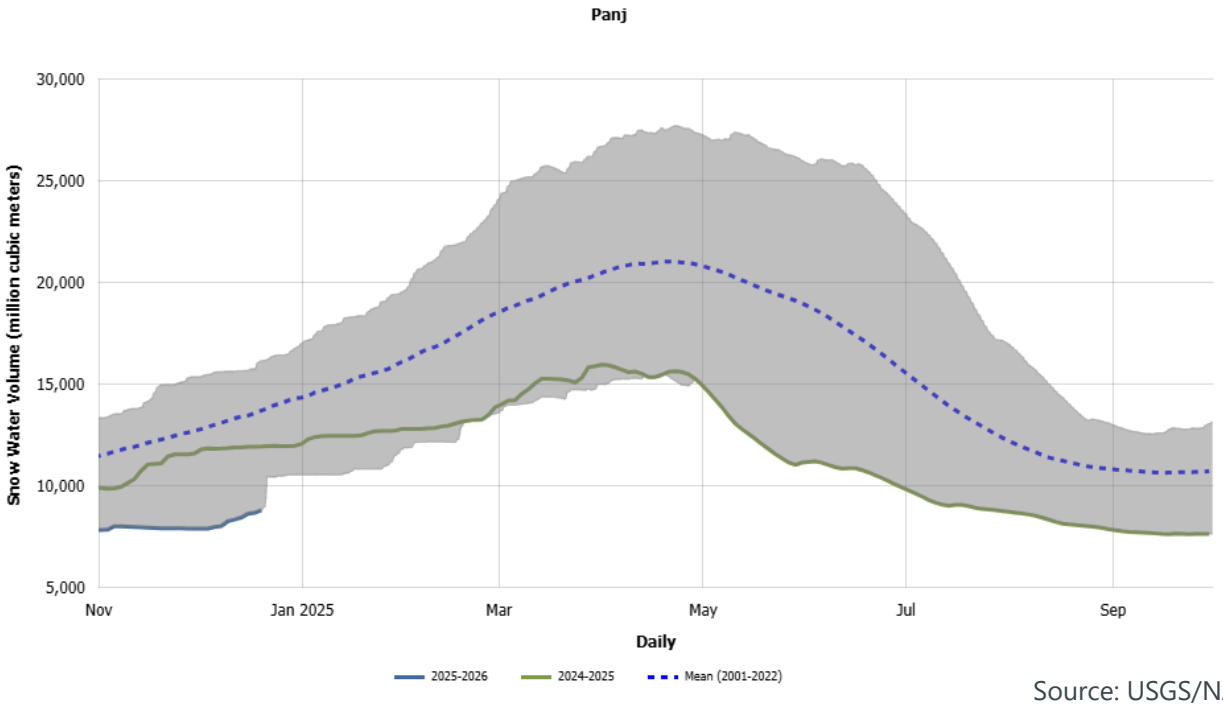
Seasonal snow water volume in 2024-25 (green line), 2025-26 (blue line), and historical average (blue dotted line) as a function of time in Kunduz (north) basin as of December 20, 2025



Source: USGS/NASA

Figure 3d

Seasonal snow water volume in 2024-25 (green line), 2025-26 (blue line), and historical average (blue dotted line) as a function of time in Panj (northeast) basin as of December 20, 2025



Source: USGS/NASA

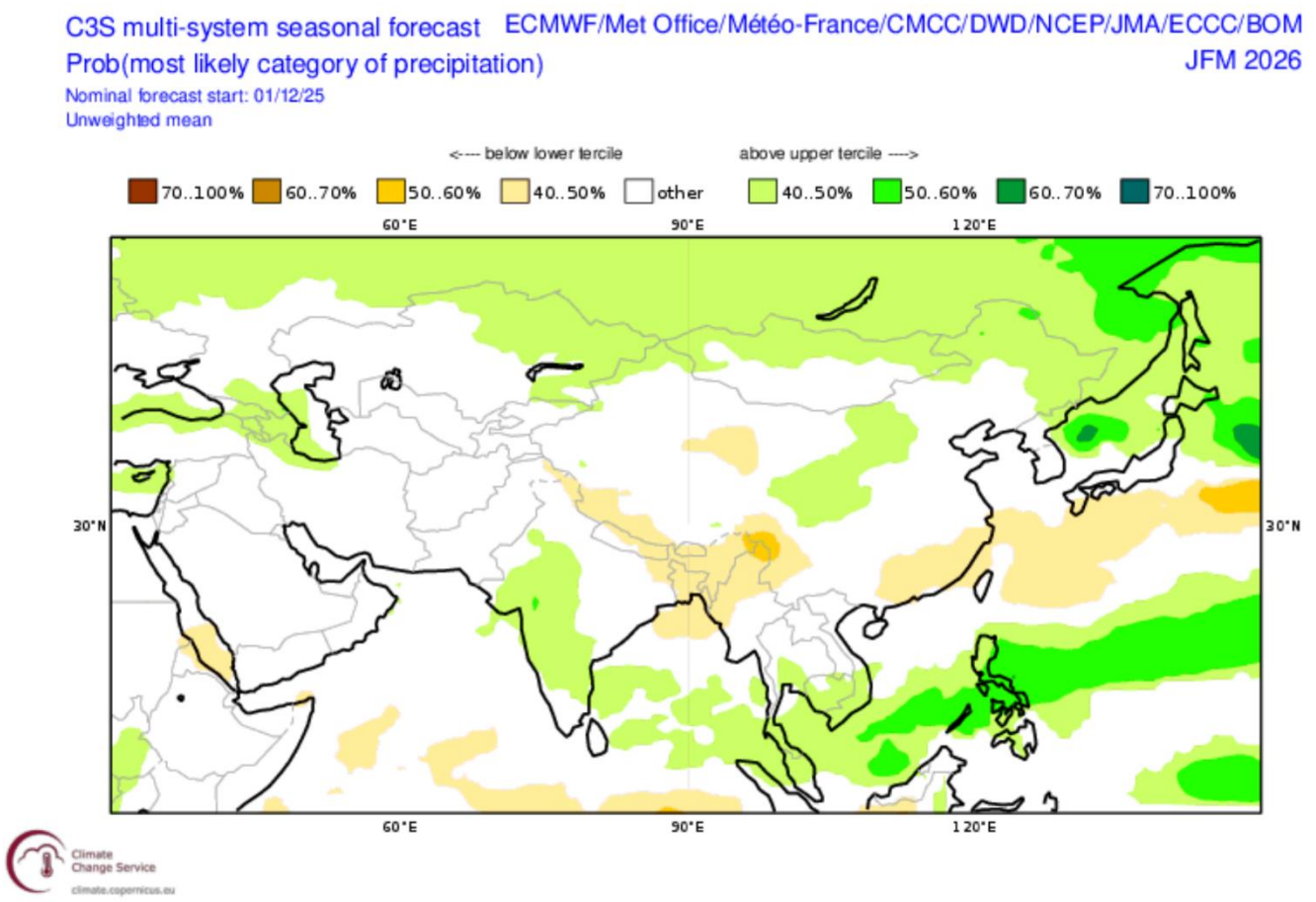
Forecast

Precipitation

The precipitation forecast for January – March 2026 from the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) System in December 2025 shows no tilt towards either above- or below-average precipitation across the country (Figure 4). Assumed average precipitation in March 2026 is expected to facilitate normal spring wheat planting operations in March-April 2026.

Figure 4

Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) multi-system seasonal precipitation forecast probabilities for January through March 2025 generated on December 1, 2025



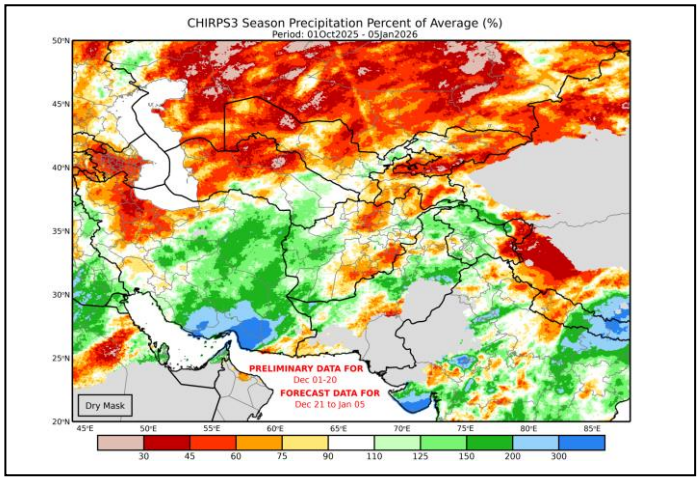
Source: Copernicus Climate Change Service

The **CHIRPS-GEFS** based short-term cumulative precipitation (October 1, 2025 – January 5, 2026) forecast shows above average precipitation conditions in western, southwestern, and eastern parts of the country while precipitation deficits will continue in the rest. Cumulative precipitation deficits in Faryab, Badghis, Herat, Farah, Nimroz, Ghor, Helmand, Kunar, and Nuristan observed in mid-December 2025 should be erased by January 5, 2026, and achieve 110-150 percent above average. Severe precipitation deficits in the rest of country are likely to be reduced by the end of the forecast period (Figure 5a).

The **ECMWF** weekly precipitation forecasts between December 29, 2025 – January 12, 2026 indicate an increased likelihood of above-average precipitation throughout the country (Figure 5b). The forecast precipitation in the coming weeks is likely to reduce the countrywide cumulative precipitation deficits that have prevailed since the beginning of the 2025/26 season.

Figure 5a

CHIRPS forecasted seasonal precipitation percent of average (%)
October 1, 2025 – January 5, 2026

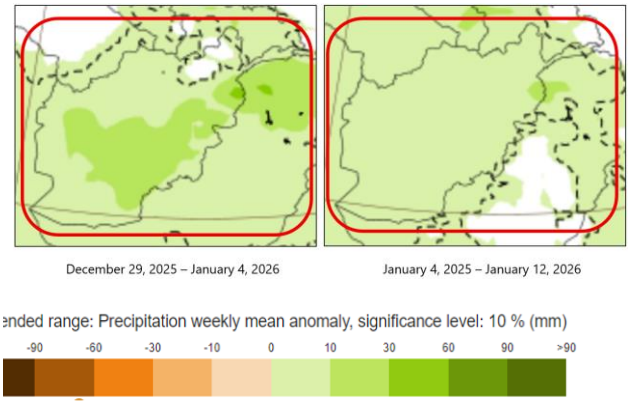


Light green to blue colors shows cumulative precipitation percent above normal while light brown to red colors shows percent of average below normal.

Source: UCSB CHC

Figure 5b

ECMWF weekly mean precipitation forecasts for December 22 – 29, 2025 and December 29, 2025 – January 4, 2026 as of December 21, 2025



Light to dark green colors show cumulative precipitation anomalies in percent above-mean while light brown to dark red colors show anomalies in percent below-mean.

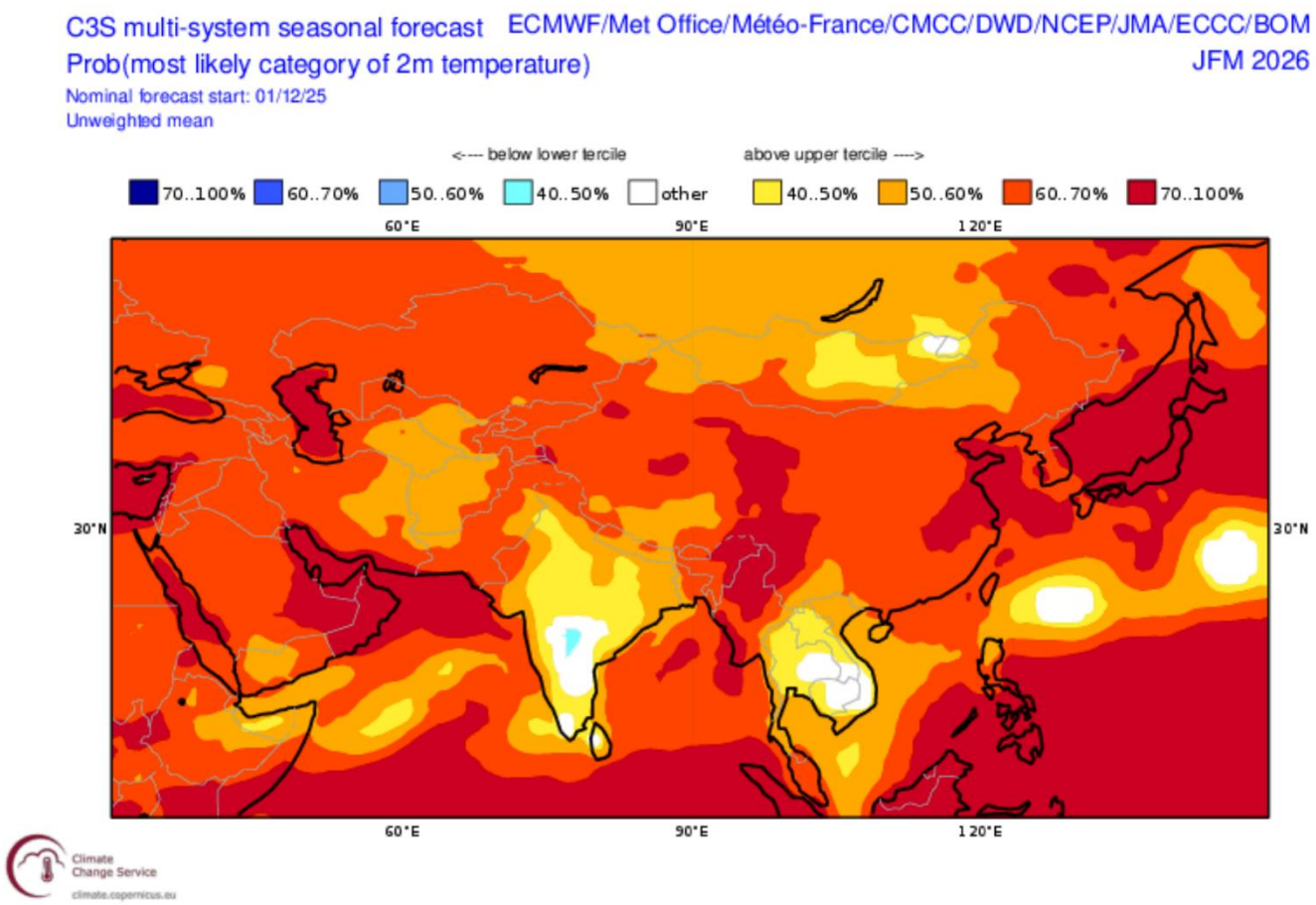
Source: ECMWF Forecast System

Temperature

There is a high probability of above-average temperatures for January – March 2025 in the forecast generated in December 2025 (Figure 6). The above average day time temperatures may lead to a rapid melt of the recent snow over medium and lower elevations in western parts of the country. In the event of below-average snowpack development during winter months, the above average day time temperatures may lead to rapid snow pack depletion and earlier-than-normal snow melt out may lead to reduced water availability for irrigated water use during spring months.

Figure 6

Climate Change Service (C3S) multi-system seasonal temperature forecast probabilities (2 m temperature) for January through March 2026 generated on December 1, 2025.



Light yellow to red colors show the likelihood of warmer temperatures in the upper tercile, while cyan to dark blue colors show the likelihood of cooler temperatures in the lower tercile.

Source: Copernicus Climate Change Service

About Seasonal Monitor

FEWS NET's Seasonal Monitor reports are produced for Central America and the Caribbean, West Africa, East Africa, Central Asia, and Somalia every 10-to-30 days during the region's respective rainy season(s). Seasonal Monitors report updates on weather events (e.g., rainfall patterns) and associated impacts on ground conditions (e.g., cropping conditions, pasture, and water availability), as well as the short-term rainfall forecast. Find more remote sensing information here.