

Favorable soil moisture conditions are beneficial for spring wheat planting

Key Messages

- Average to above-average cumulative precipitation (October 1, 2025, through February 25, 2026) conditions are seen in the central, northern, and northeastern parts of the country. Below-average cumulative precipitation conditions are seen in the rest of the country during same period.
- Below-average snow water equivalent (SWE) persists at higher elevations across the northern, southeastern, central, and central highlands regions. In contrast, isolated mid-elevation areas within the central highlands, central, northern, western, and southern regions are currently experiencing average to above-average SWE conditions.
- Snow Water Volume (SWV) levels are below average throughout the country except for above average in Khash Khuspas basin in the southwest. SWVs are currently at near record lows in Panj, Kokcha_Ab-i-Rustaq, Khanabad, Kunduz, Khulm, Balkhab, Sari Pul, Shamal, and Kabul basins. SWV levels in all basins have declined sharply after mid-February except in northeastern basins wherein they have been at record minimums since the start of the season.
- The ongoing weak **La Niña** is forecast to end during the northern hemisphere spring of 2026, transitioning to ENSO-neutral conditions. A developing El Niño is then forecast to follow ENSO-neutral in the summer of 2026, with the probability of these conditions exceeding 60% by the August-October 2026 period.
- The **CHIRPS-GEFS** short-term forecast for cumulative precipitation (October 1, 2025 – March 10, 2026) predicts below-average precipitation (45–75% of average) conditions in the southwest, south, central, and central highlands. However, north and northwest parts are likely to experience average to mildly below average cumulative precipitation by the end of the forecast period.
- **ECMWF** weekly forecasts till March 9, 2026, indicate increased likelihood of above-average precipitation in northwestern, northern, and central parts while there is an increased likelihood of below-average precipitation in the rest. In the following week ending March 16, 2026, there is an increased likelihood of below-average precipitation in central, southern, and southwestern parts of the country while there is no tilt towards above- or below-average precipitation in the rest during the same period.
- The **North American Multi-Model Ensemble (NMME)** forecasts increased likelihood of below-average precipitation across most parts of the country for March-May 2026. Although there is an increased likelihood for below-average precipitation forecast for areas bordering central Asian countries, there is no tilt towards above- or below-average precipitation forecast in the rest during April-June 2026. NMME forecasts increased likelihood of above-average temperatures for March-June 2026.
- As per field informants, there is an increased risk of localized flooding, inundation of agricultural areas, damages to roads and bridges, irrigation infrastructure, population displacement in urban areas, and a potential disruption of market access within the affected areas in case of heavy localized precipitation events in the coming months.
- As per field informants, precipitation in the first week of February has created favorable growth conditions in the irrigated and rainfed wheat regions in the country. Farmers have begun land preparation activities taking advantage of favorable dry weather conditions and pliant soil conditions. Early sowing of spring wheat is expected, which will most likely compensate for the shortfalls in winter wheat planted areas in some parts of the country.

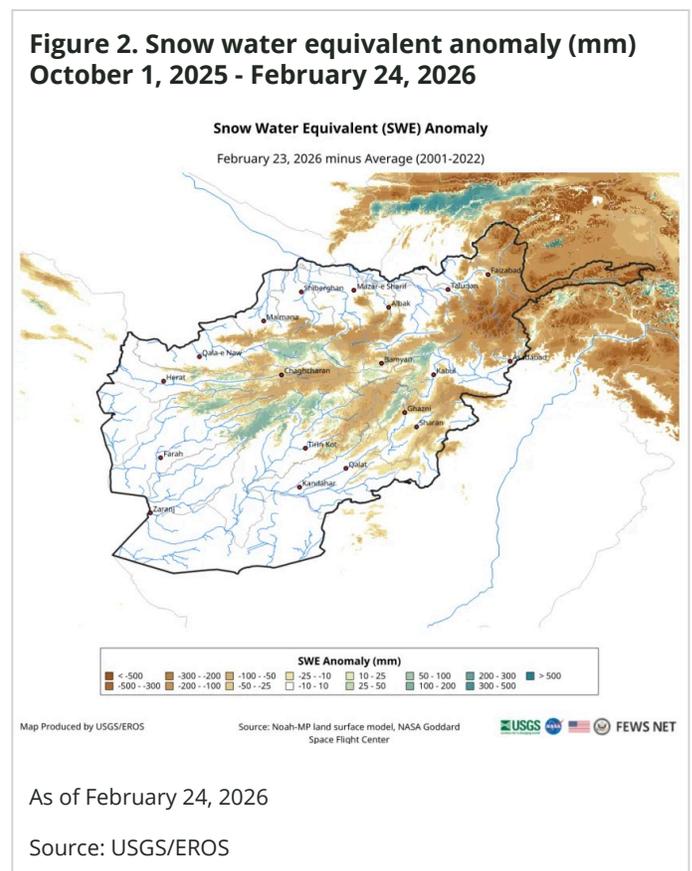
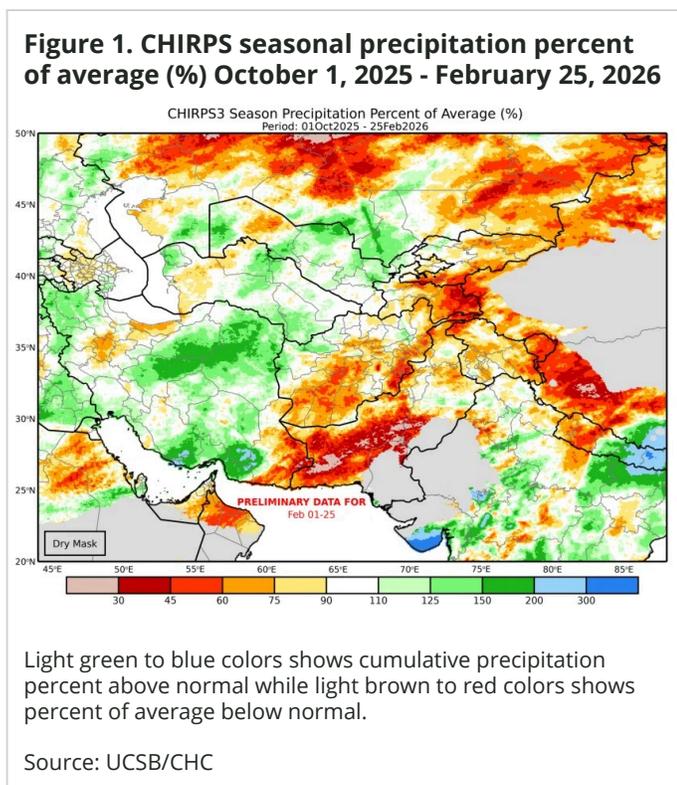


Update on Seasonal Progress

Currently average to above-average cumulative precipitation (October 1, 2025 – February 25, 2026) conditions are seen in some isolated locations in the northwest (excluding Badakhshan), north, central highlands, and northeast while below-average conditions are seen in the rest as of reporting date. Currently, above normal SWV level is seen in Khash Khuspas basin in the southwest while below normal SWVs are seen throughout the country. SWV levels in all the basins have declined sharply since the first week of February (except in the northeastern basins that have recorded minimums since the beginning of the season). As per field informants, farmers are taking advantage of dry weather and favorable soil moisture conditions for land preparation and planting activities of spring wheat.

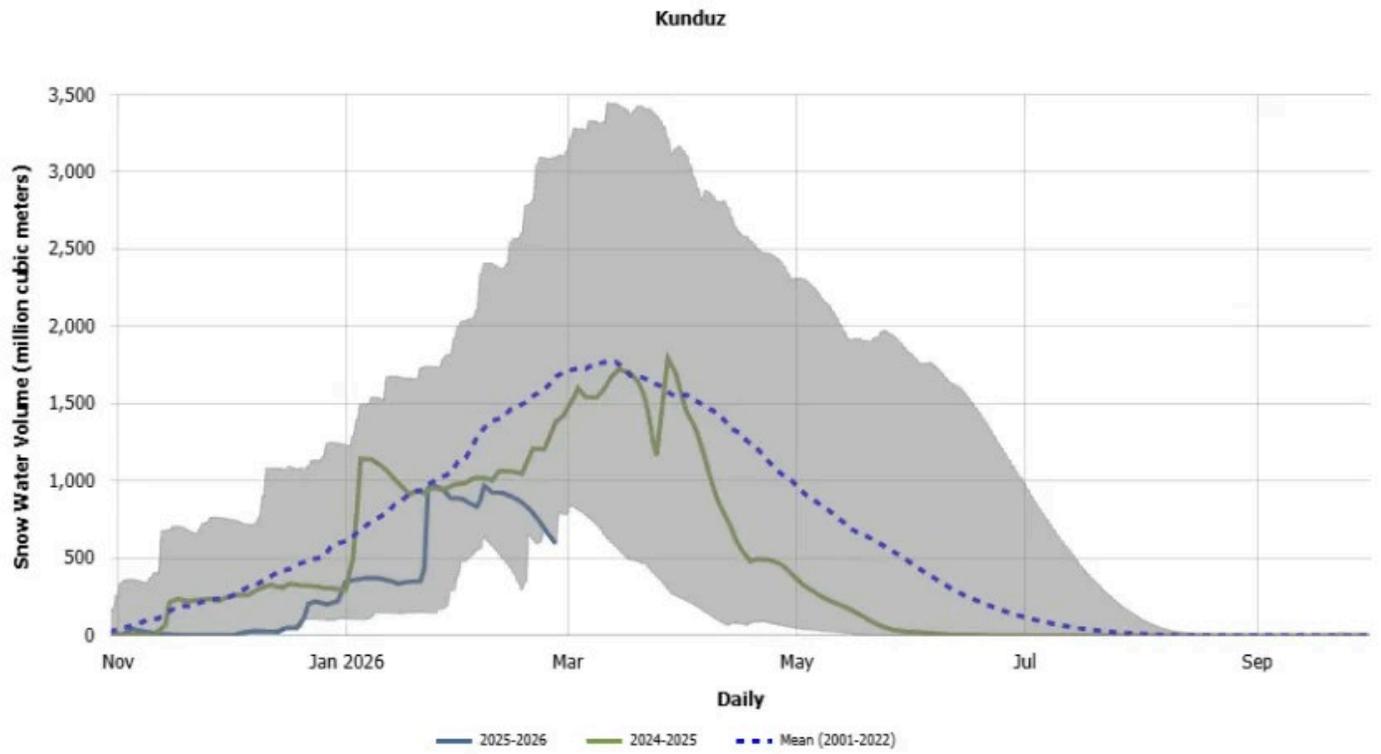
Precipitation

Above average cumulative precipitation (October 1, 2025 – February 25, 2026) up to 125% of average is seen in Herat, Badghis, Faryab, Jawzjan, Sari Pul, Balkh, Kunduz, Samangan, Baghlan, and in parts of Takhar, while below-average cumulative precipitation conditions (45-75% of average) are seen in the rest of the country (**Figure 1**).



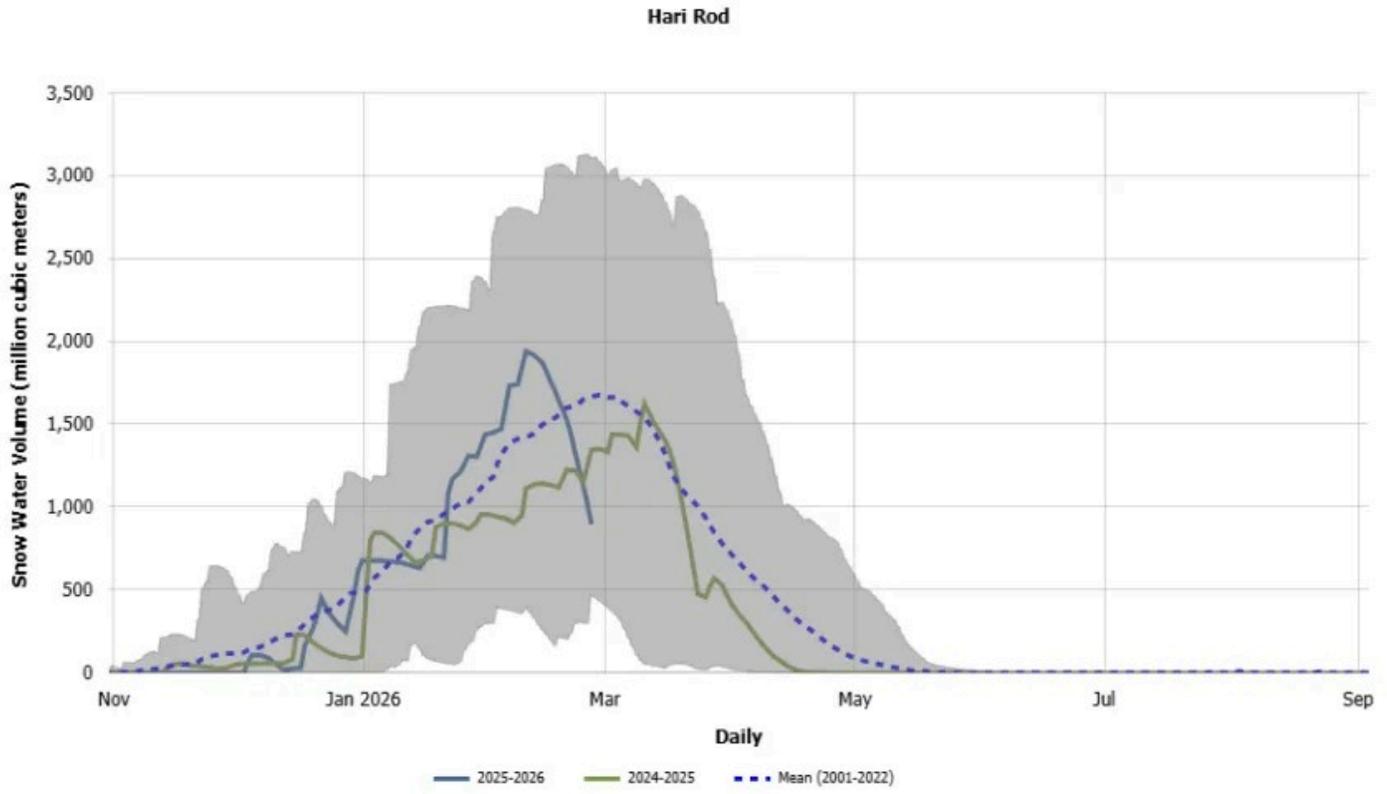
Record minimum SWVs persist in Panj, Kokcha-Ab_i_Rustaq, Khanabad, Kunduz, Balkhab, Khulm, and Shamal basins. Average to above-average SWV levels are present in the remaining basins as of the reporting date. **Figure 3** (insets) – below-average levels in Hari Rod (west) and Helmand (south), while record minimum levels in Kunduz (north) and Panj (northeast) basins as of February 25, 2026.

Figure 3a. 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 February 25, 2026



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 February 25, 2026



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 Helmand (south) basin as of February 25, 2026

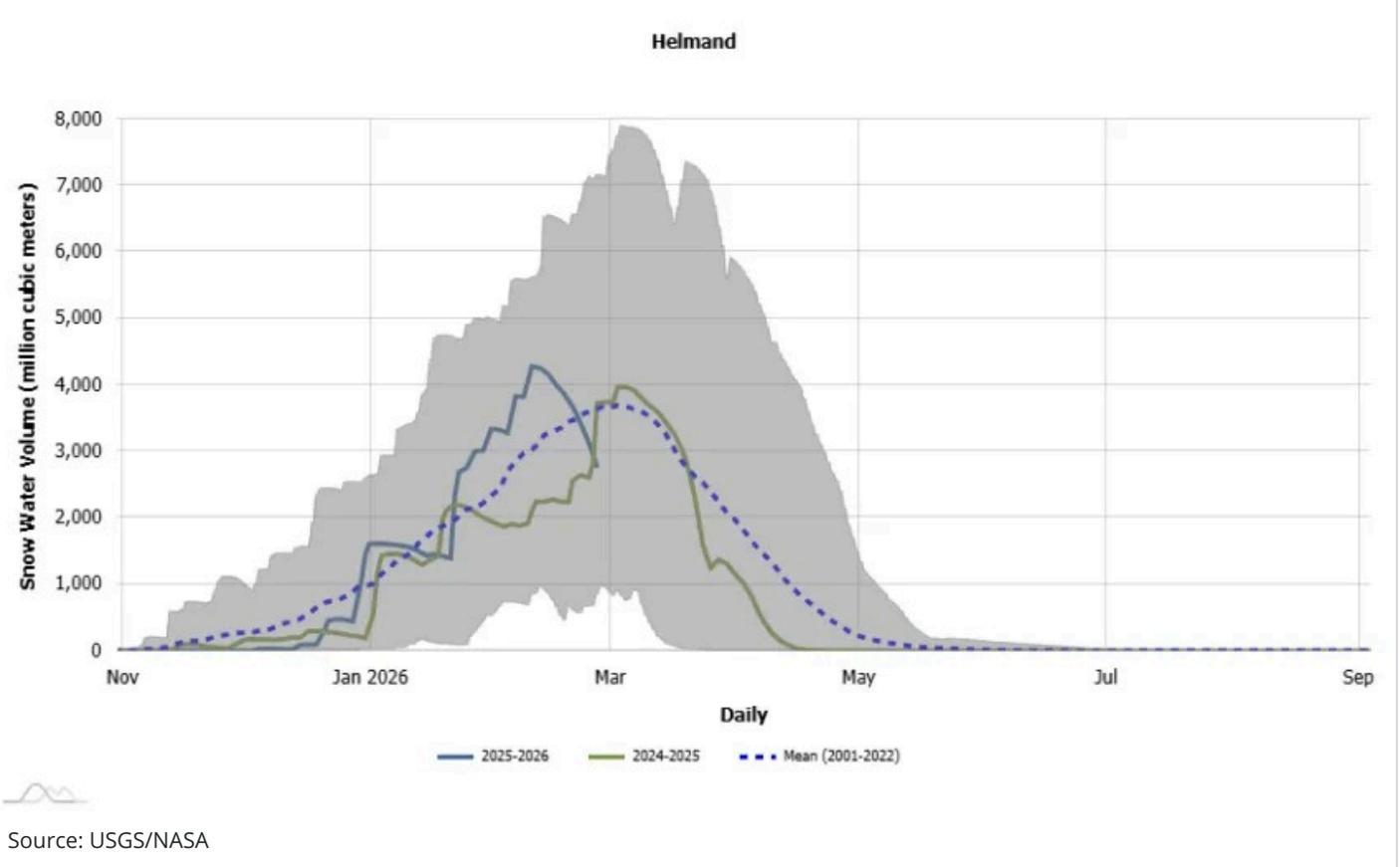
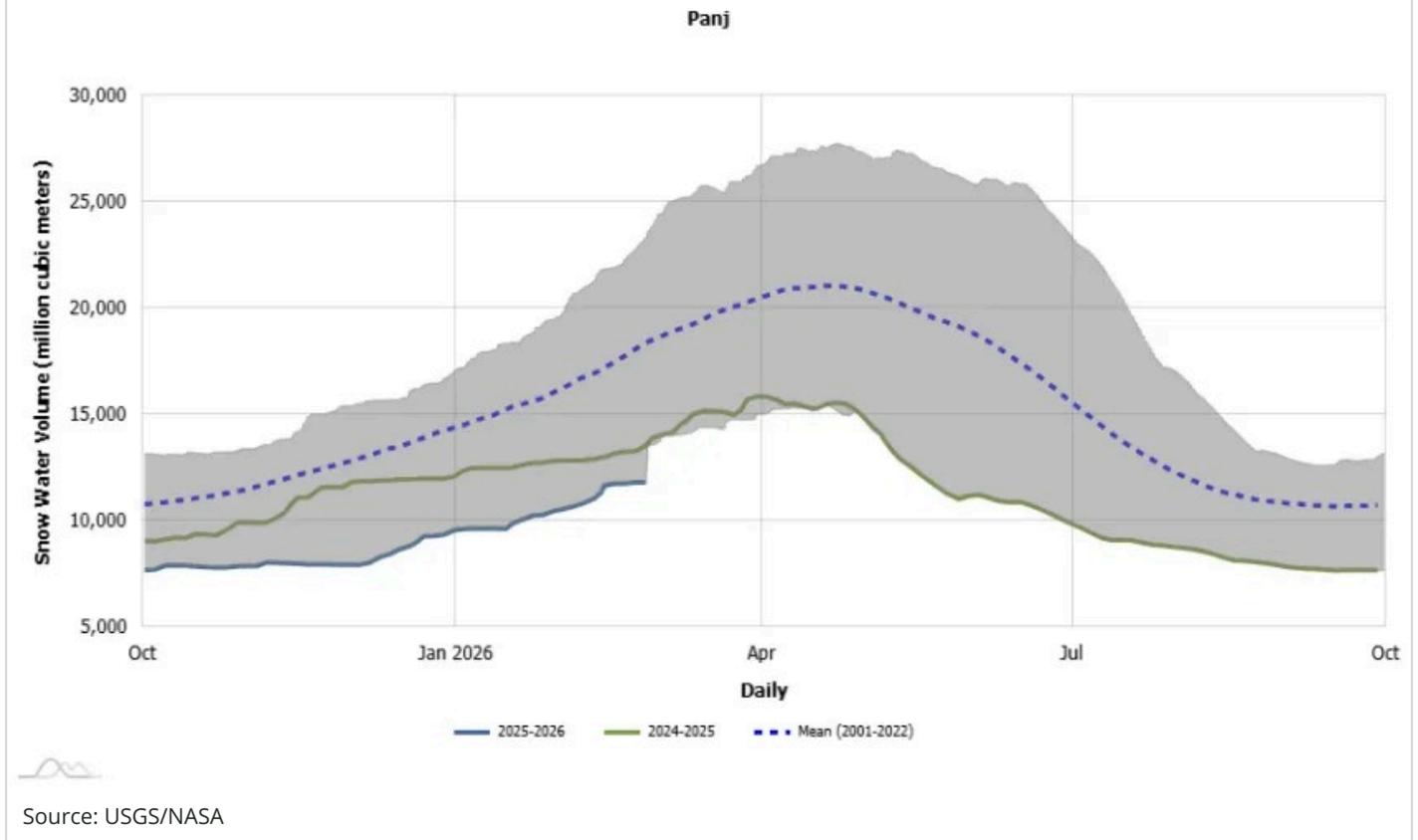


Figure 3d. Seasonal snow water volume in 2024-25 (green line), 2025-26 (blue line), and historical average (blue dotted line) as a function of time in Panj (northeast) basin as of February 25, 2026



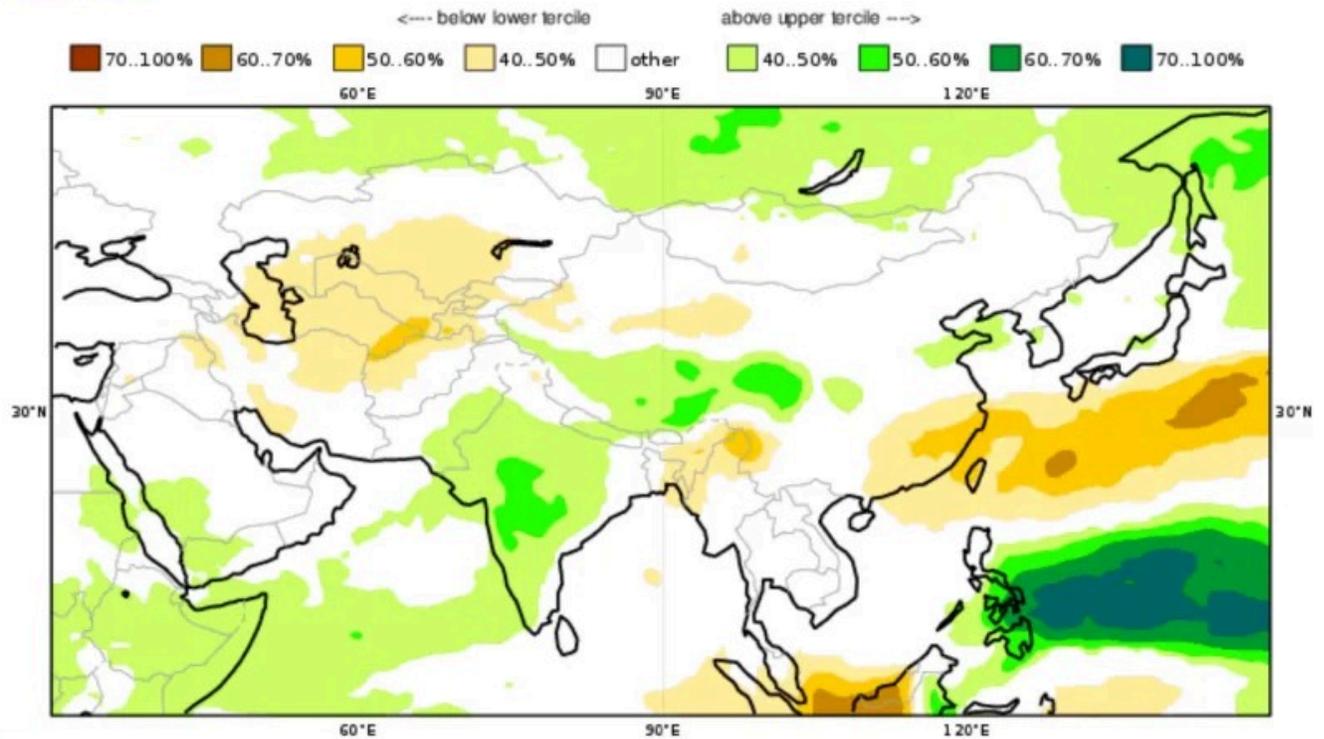
Forecast

Precipitation

The precipitation forecast for March – May 2026 from the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) System in February 2026 shows no tilt towards either above- or below-average precipitation in the southern portion while there is an increased likelihood of below-average precipitation in the northern portion of the country (**Figure 4**).

Figure 4. Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) multi-system seasonal precipitation forecast probabilities for March through May 2026 generated on February 1, 2026

C3S multi-system seasonal forecast ECMWF/Met Office/Météo-France/CMCC/DWD/NCEP/ECCC/BOM
 Prob(most likely category of precipitation) MAM 2026
 Nominal forecast start: 01/02/26
 Unweighted mean



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Light yellow to red colors show the likelihood of below normal precipitation in the lower tercile, and light to dark green colors show the likelihood of above normal precipitation in the lower tercile.

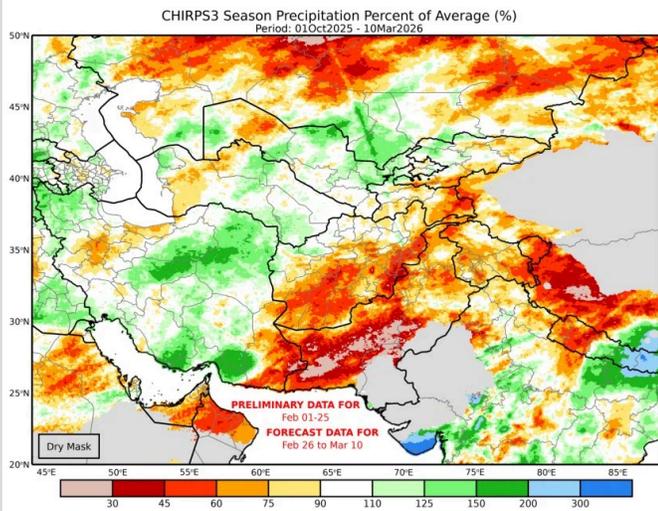
Source: Copernicus Climate Change Service

The **CHIRPS-GEFS** short-term cumulative precipitation forecast (October 1, 2025 – March 10, 2026) indicates above average cumulative precipitation conditions in parts of Herat, Badghis, Faryab, Jawzjan, Balkh, Kunduz, Samangan, Baghlan, and parts of Takhar. Cumulative precipitation deficits in the range of 45-75% of average will continue in the rest of the country (**Figure 5a**).

The **ECMWF** weekly precipitation forecast between March 2 – March 9, 2026 indicates an increased likelihood of above-average precipitation in western, northern and northeastern parts while below-average precipitation is most likely in rest of the country (**Figure 5b, left inset**). ECMWF short-term forecast for the week ending March 16, 2026

indicates an increased likelihood of below-average precipitation in southwestern, southern, central, and southeastern parts while there is no tilt towards above- or below-average precipitation in the rest of the country (**Figure 5b, right inset**).

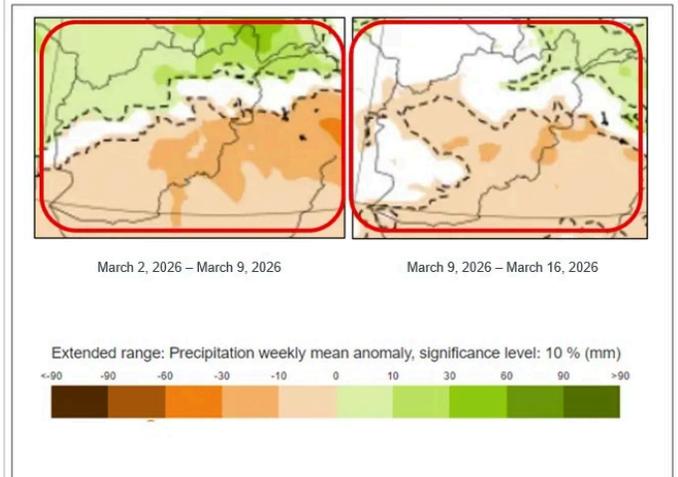
Figure 5a. CHIRPS forecasted seasonal precipitation percent of average (%) October 1, 2025 - March 10, 2026



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

Source: UCSB/CHC

Figure 5b. ECMWF weekly mean precipitation forecasts for March 2, 2026 – March 9, 2026, and March 9, 2026 – March 16, 2026, as of February 27, 2026



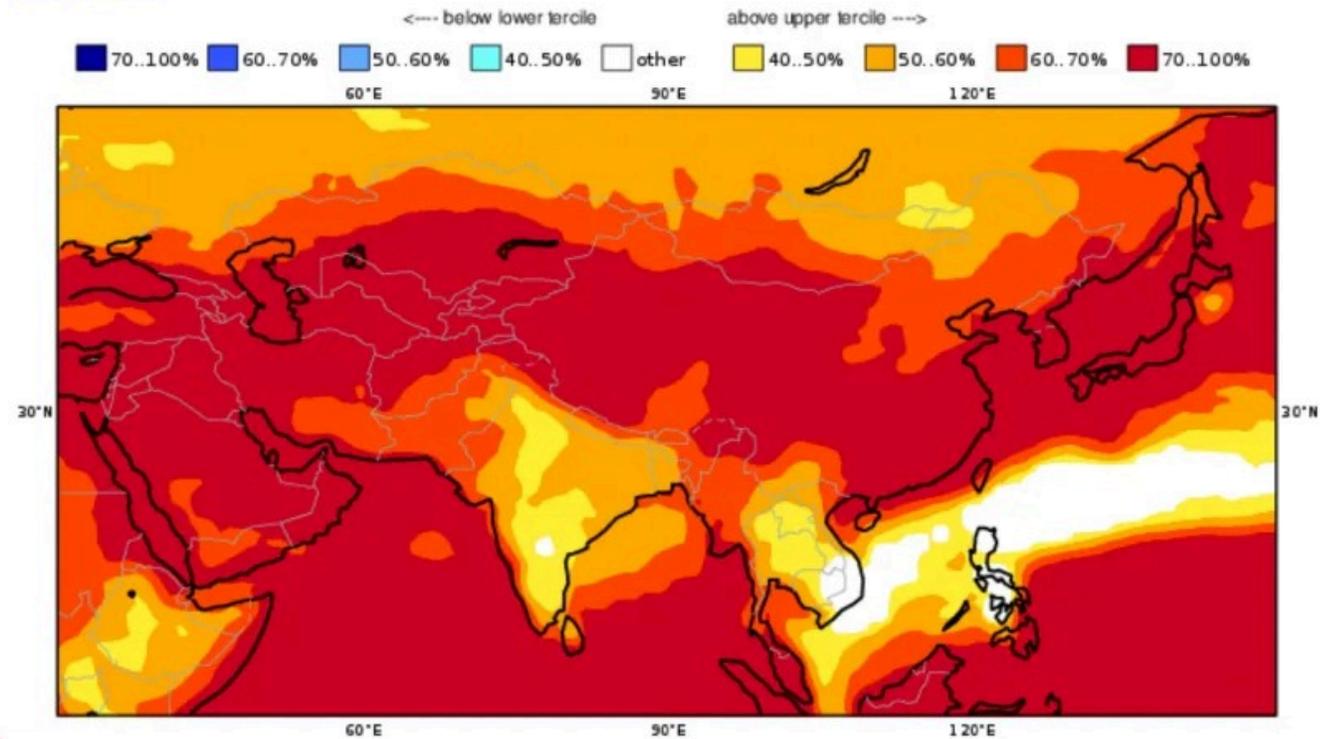
Source: ECMWF Forecast System

Long-term forecasts for March-May and April-June 2026 indicate a high probability of above-average temperatures through end of the 2025/26 main agricultural season (**Figures 6 and 7**). A combination of intense rainfall and rapid snow melt (due to above average daytime temperatures) may raise the risk of localized floods (both agricultural and urban) and landslides in the western, central, northern, and northeastern parts of the country.

Figure 6. Climate Change Service (C3S) multi-system seasonal temperature forecast probabilities (2 m temperature) for March through May 2026 generated on February 1, 2026

C3S multi-system seasonal forecast ECMWF/Met Office/Météo-France/CMCC/DWD/NCEP/ECCC/BOM
 Prob(most likely category of 2m temperature) MAM 2026

Nominal forecast start: 01/02/26
 Unweighted mean



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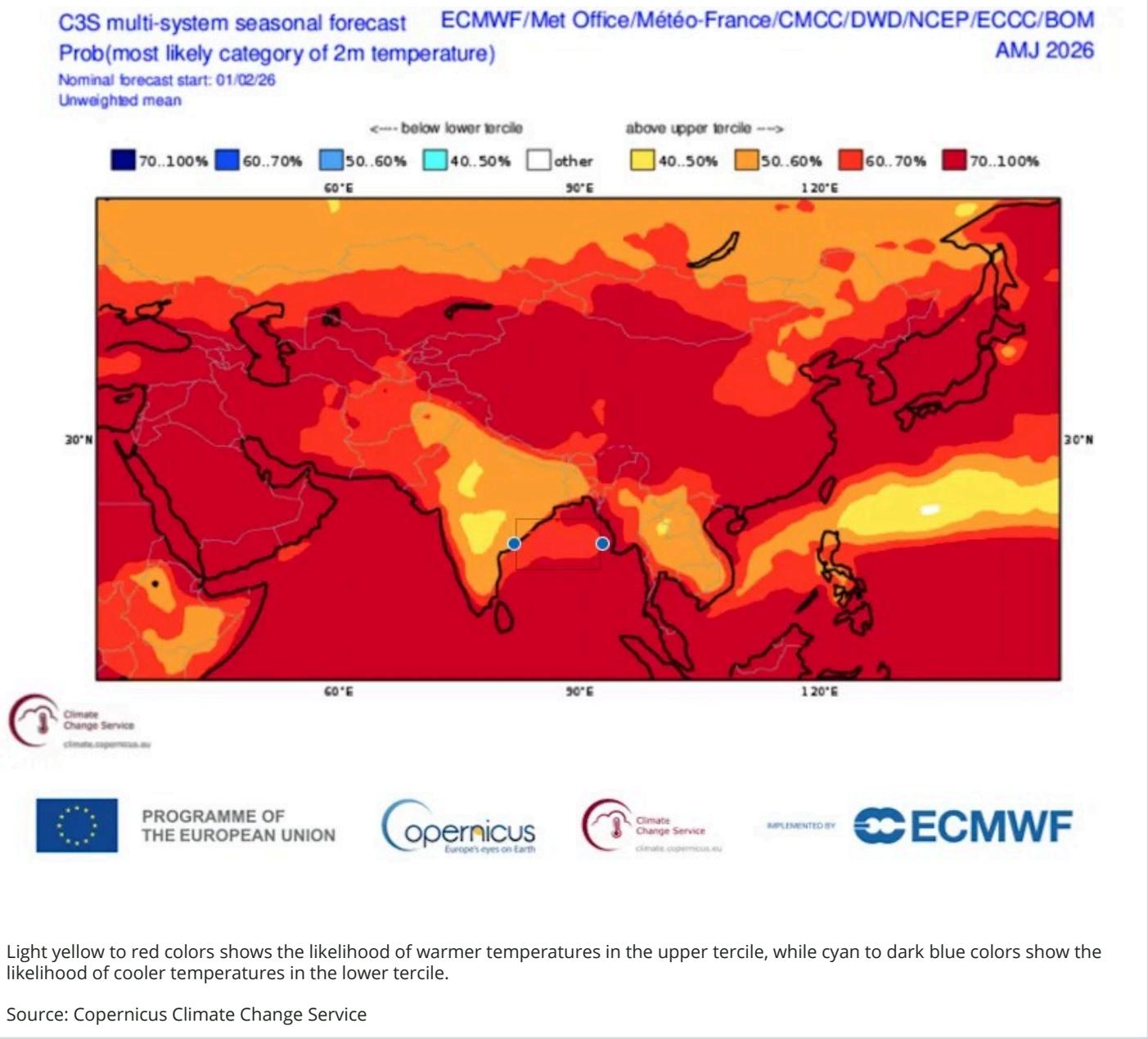
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Light yellow to red colors shows the likelihood of warmer temperatures in the upper tercile, while cyan to dark blue colors show the likelihood of cooler temperatures in the lower tercile.

Source: Copernicus Climate Change Service

Figure 7. Climate Change Service (C3S) multi-system seasonal temperature forecast probabilities (2 m temperature) for April through June 2026 generated on February 1, 2026



Crops, orchards, pastures and rangelands

Dry weather conditions in February have created favorable soil moisture conditions for land preparation and planting of spring wheat in different parts of the country. Normally, above-average day time temperatures, moderate soil moisture and humid conditions support quicker seed germination and rapid vegetative growth. As per field reports earlier-than-normal green up of winter wheat post dormancy has been seen in some parts locations within the irrigated wheat cultivated areas. The outlook for regional vegetation health in the coming months is expected to be mixed due to forecasts of below-average precipitation and above-average temperatures in coming months. Early blooming of almond trees has been reported due to above-average winter temperatures thus increasing the risk of spring frost in northern, northeastern and central parts in coming weeks.

The short-term precipitation forecast indicates above-average rainfall through March 16, 2026, in the wheat-growing belt in the northern parts of the country. This increased precipitation is expected to benefit both irrigated and rainfed wheat in two ways: (i) facilitate above-average spring wheat planting, and (ii) support winter wheat during its early vegetative growth following dormancy. Current SWV levels in different basins are most likely to address the water demands of irrigated wheat till harvest in May-June. However, below-average snowpack development and above average day time temperatures may lead to reduced water availability for second crop cultivation during summer.

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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](#).