

Favorable March precipitation supports spring wheat planting

Key Messages

- Below-average cumulative precipitation during the rainy season (October 1, 2025, through March 25, 2026) conditions are seen in most parts of the country. Average to above-average cumulative precipitation conditions exist in some isolated places in the western, northern, and southern parts as of the reporting date.
- Below-average snow water equivalent (SWE) conditions persist except for above average SWE conditions seen in isolated locations in the Bala Murghab_Kushk and Balkhab basins.
- Snow Water Volume (SWV) levels are below average in all basins. SWV reached zero levels in Arghandab, Ghazni, Shamal, and Shirin Tagab basins six to eight weeks earlier-than-normal. SWV's continue to be at record minimum levels in Panj, Kokcha_Ab-i-Rustaq, and Khanabad basins in the northeast.
- **ENSO-neutral** conditions are favored through till the end of wheat harvest during May – July 2026. El Niño is likely to begin June-August (60% chance) and persist through 2026, which may influence the start of the 2026/27 wet season.
- The **CHIRPS-GEFS** short-term forecast for cumulative precipitation (October 1, 2025 – April 10, 2026) predicts below-average precipitation (45–75% of average) conditions in the southwest, south, central, northeast, and central highlands. However, the rest of the country is likely to experience average to above-average cumulative precipitation by the end of the forecast period.
- **ECMWF** weekly forecasts through April 13, 2026, indicate increased likelihood of above-average precipitation in all parts of the country.
- The **North American Multi-Model Ensemble (NMME)** forecast indicates no tilt towards above- or below-average precipitation across most parts of the country for April - June 2026. Anticipated stable spring rains allow for normal spring wheat planting and help prevent moisture stress in both wheat and pastures. **NMME** also forecasts increased likelihood of above-average temperatures during the above period.
- As per field information, dry spells during early March led to moisture stress in rainfed wheat in the northeast and cold spots adversely affected wheat in the northwest. Nationwide precipitation in the last ten days of the month, though less intense than expected, was reported to have improved wheat and pasture conditions across the country.
- Spring wheat planting is expected to be well supported by the widespread above-average precipitation forecast in the coming weeks. Harvest of early-sown wheat is expected to begin late-April and early May as per schedule.
- According to field informants, extraction of groundwater has been reported to support water needs of cash crops.

Update on Seasonal Progress

As per field informants, different parts of the country received widespread above-average precipitation during last week of March. Currently average cumulative precipitation (October 1, 2025 – March 25, 2026) conditions are seen in some isolated locations in the west, north and south. The remainder of the country continues to experience widespread below-average cumulative precipitation conditions. SWV levels are below normal in all basins. SWVs in



most of the southern basins have reached their zero level at least 6 – 8 weeks earlier-than-normal. Currently, there are no reports of adverse wheat conditions in the country. Forecast above-average precipitation in the coming weeks will support both irrigated and rainfed wheat, and pastures.

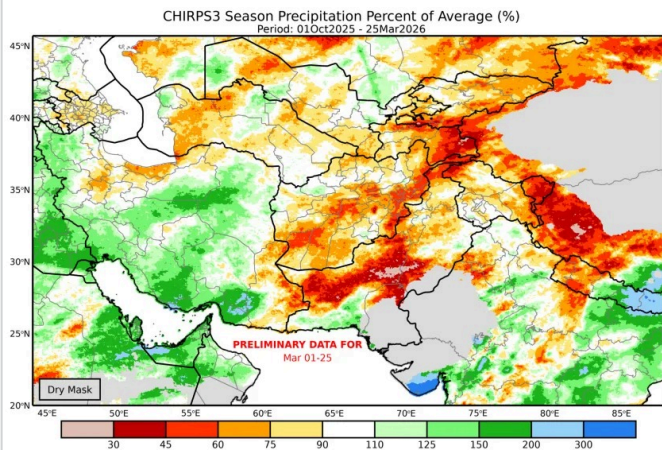
Precipitation

Above average cumulative precipitation (October 1, 2025 – March 25, 2026) conditions up to 125% of average are seen in isolated locations in Herat, Badghis, Faryab, Sari Pul, Balkh, Samangan, Baghlan in the north, and in Ghazni and Zabul in the south while below-average cumulative precipitation conditions (45-75% of average) are seen elsewhere (**Figure 1**).

Snow water volume

Below-average SWE conditions exist over higher elevation areas for the fifth year in a row. Currently, average to above-average SWE conditions are seen in some isolated parts in the central highlands (**Figure 2**).

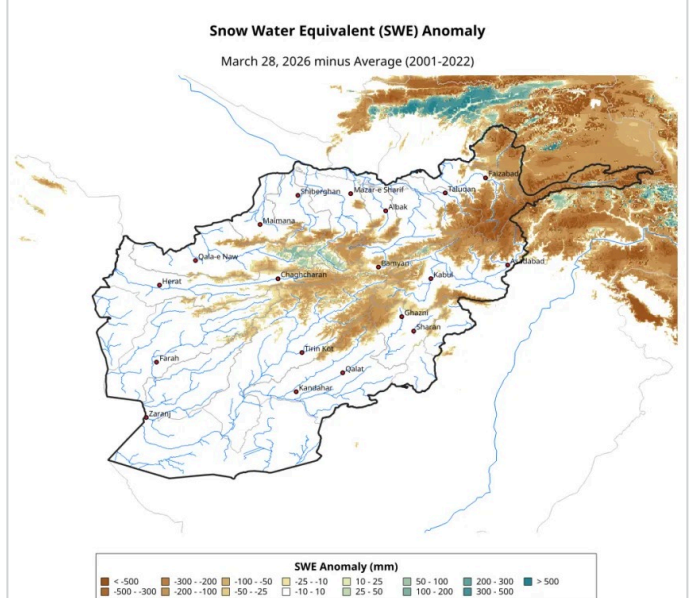
Figure 1. CHIRPS Seasonal precipitation percent of Average (%) October 1, 2025 - March 25, 2026



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 2. Snow water equivalent anomaly (mm), October 1, 2025 – March 28, 2026

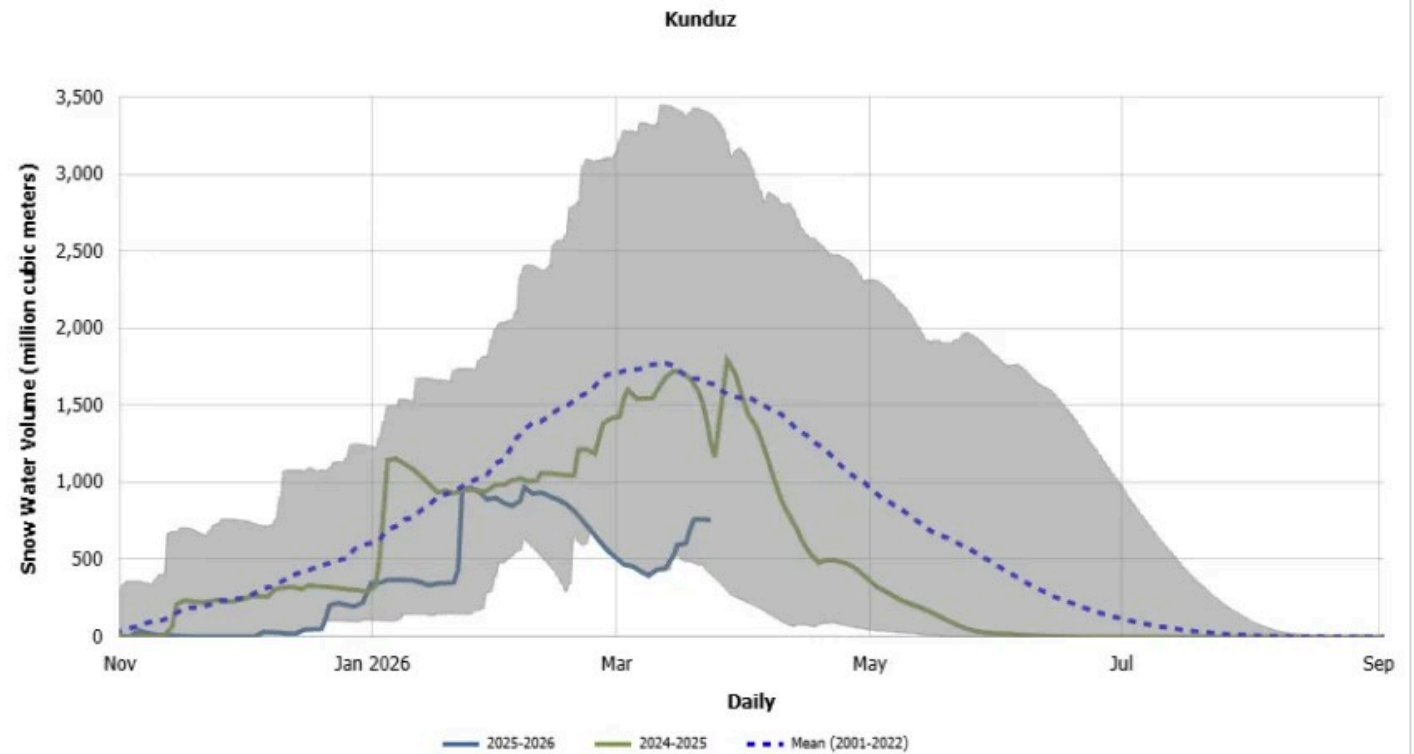


Map Produced by USGS/EROS Source: Noah-MP land surface model, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center USGS FEWS NET

Source: USGS/FEWS NET

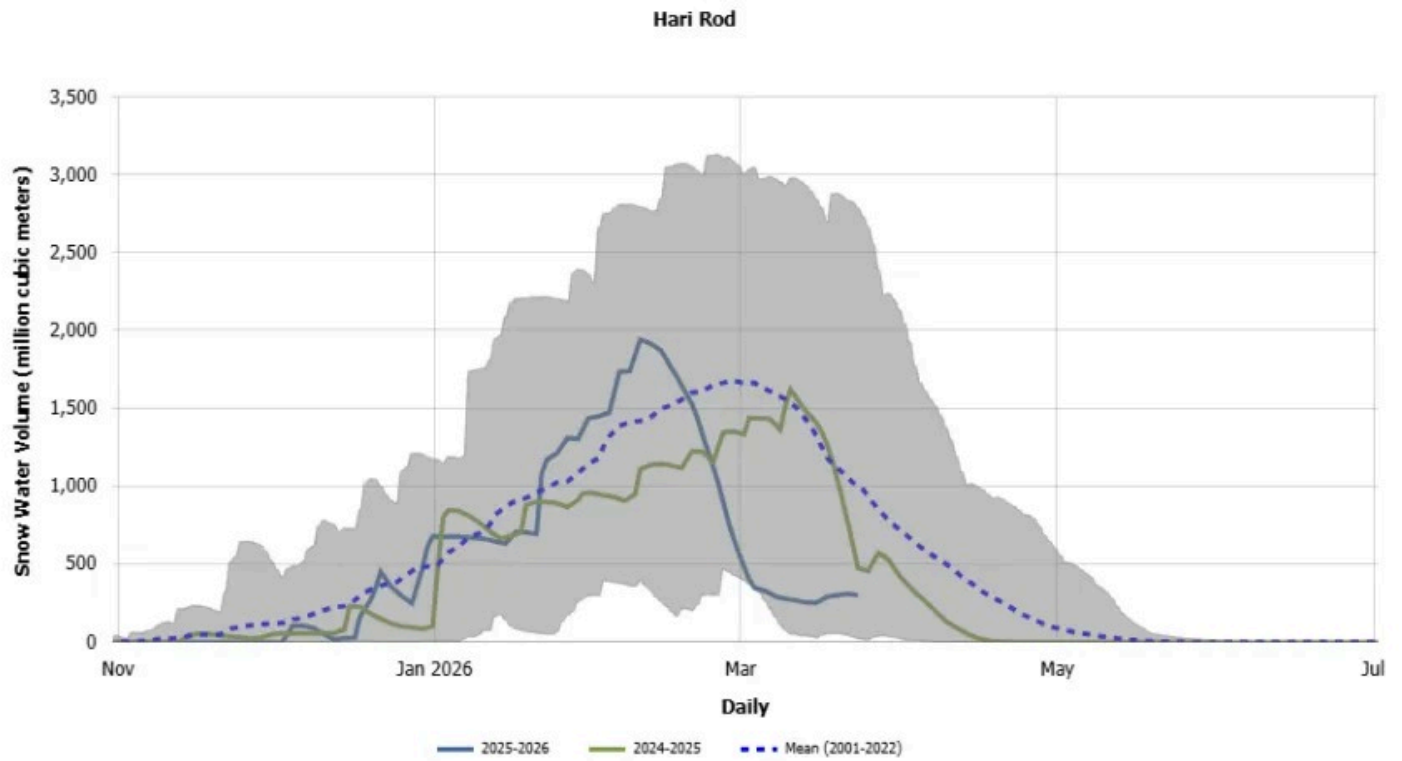
SWV levels have dropped sharply in March and remain below average across all basins. While record minimum SWV levels persist in Panj, Kokcha-Ab_i_Rustaq, Khanabad, and Khulm basins, SWVs have reached zero levels at least 6-8 weeks earlier-than-normal in Shamal, Ghazni, Arghandab, and Shirin Tagab basins. **Figure 3** a-d indicate below-average SWV levels in Hari Rod (west), Helmand (south), Kunduz (north), and record minimum level in Panj (northeast) basins as of March 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 March 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 March 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 March 25, 2026

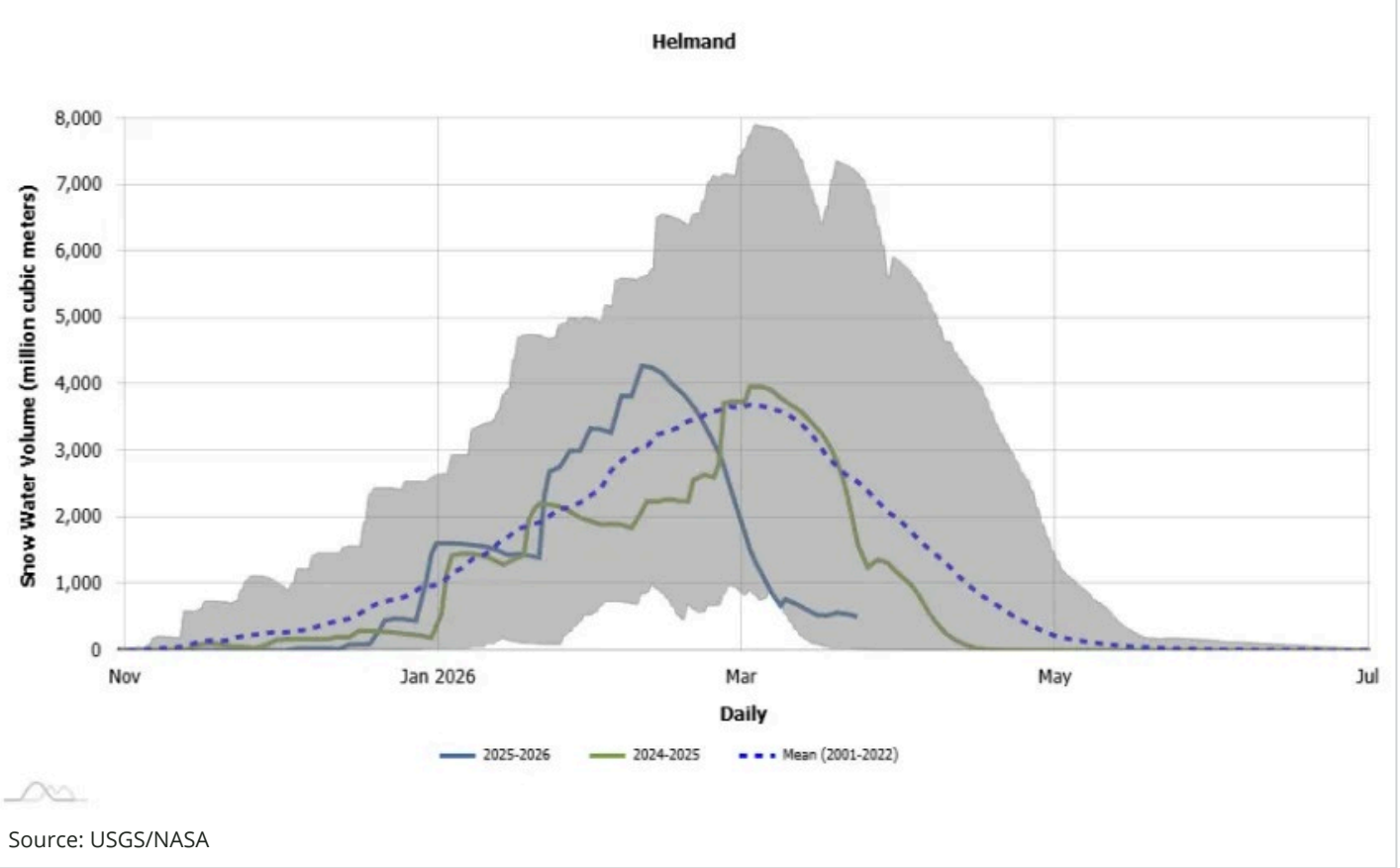
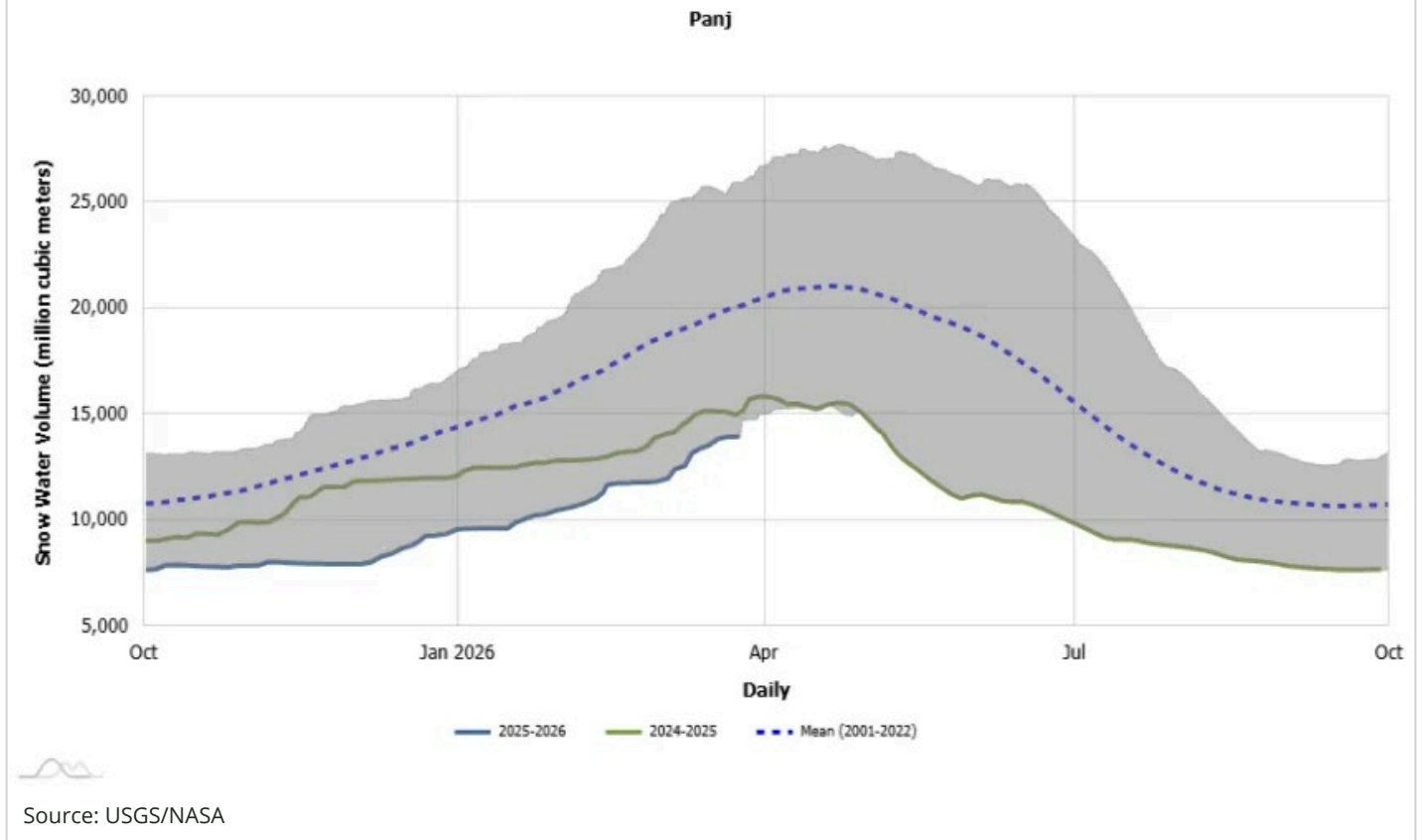


Figure 3d. Seasonal snow water volume in 2024-25 (green line), 2025-26 (blue line), and historical average (blue dotted line) as a function of time in Panj (northeast) basin as of March 25, 2026



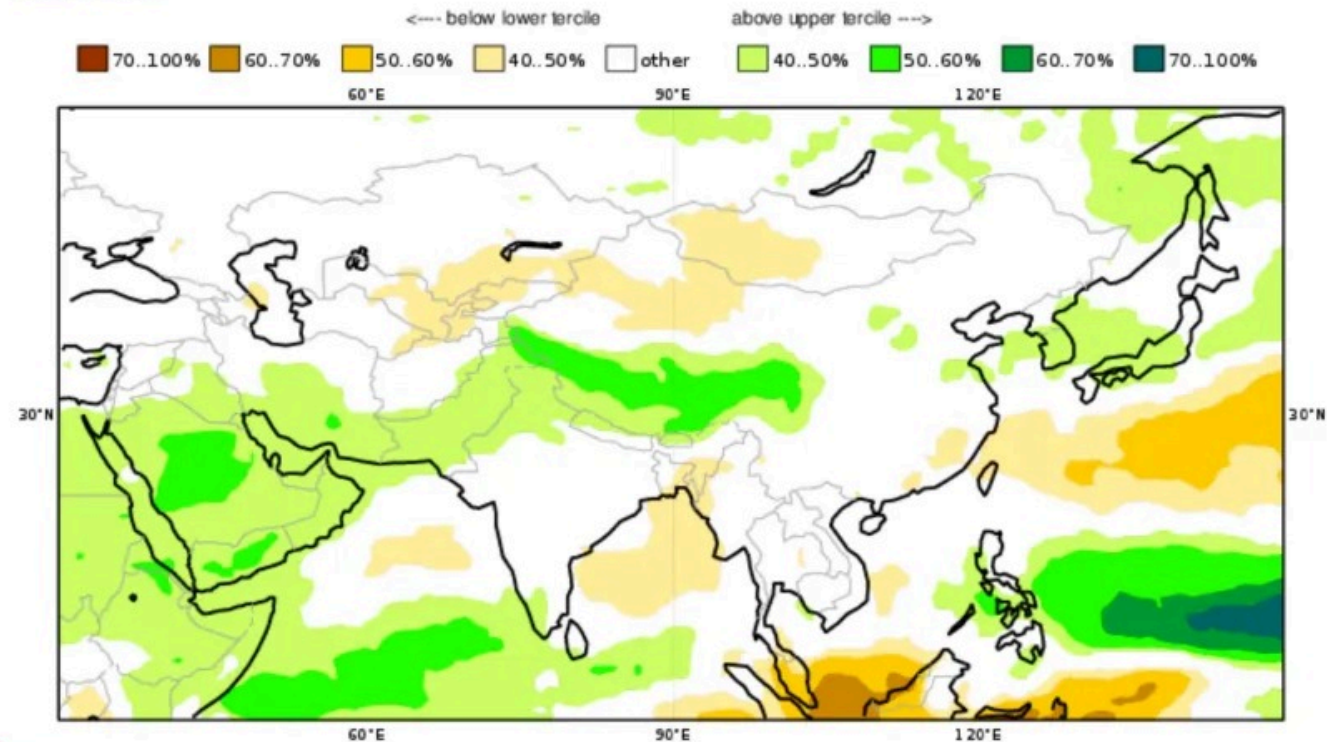
Forecast

Precipitation

The precipitation forecast for March – May 2026 from the Copernicus Climate Change Service (C3S) System in March 2026 shows no tilt towards either above- or below-average precipitation in the country (**Figure 4**). This suggests that rainfall may become stable throughout the rest of spring, which should allow for normal spring wheat planting and help prevent moisture stress in both wheat and pastures.

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

C3S multi-system seasonal forecast ECMWF/Met Office/Météo-France/CMCC/DWD/NCEP/ECCC/BOM
 Prob(most likely category of precipitation) AMJ 2026
 Nominal forecast start: 01/03/26
 Unweighted mean



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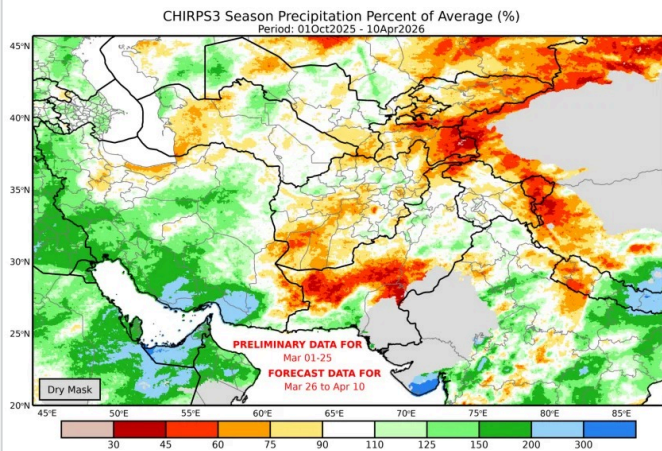
Light yellow to red colors show likelihood of below normal precipitation in the lower tercile, and light to dark green colors show the likelihood of above normal precipitation in upper tercile

Source: Copernicus Climate Change Service

The **CHIRPS-GEFS** short-term cumulative precipitation forecast (October 1, 2025 – April 10, 2026) indicates significant reduction in cumulative precipitation deficits in different parts of the country. Above average cumulative precipitation conditions are expected in the northern, central highlands, and southern parts. Cumulative precipitation deficits in the range of 75 - 90% of average will continue in western and central parts, and along the northern and northeastern areas bordering Turkmenistan, and Tajikistan (**Figure 5**). The **ECMWF** weekly precipitation forecasts between March

30 – April 13, 2026 indicate an increased likelihood of above-average precipitation throughout the country (**Figure 6**). While the overall flood risk is anticipated to be low, periods of intense rainfall could still result in localized flooding and landslides in the country.

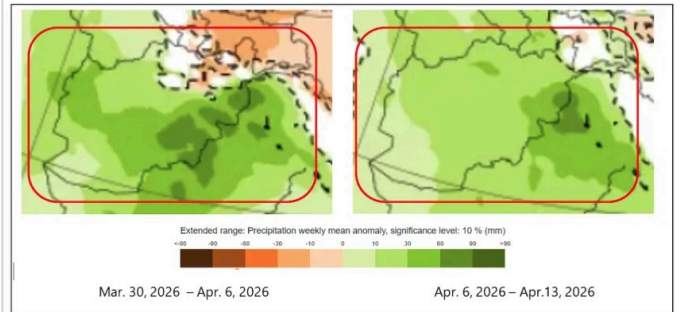
Figure 5. CHIRPS3 forecasted seasonal precipitation percent of average (%) October 1, 2025 - April 10, 2026



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 6. ECMWF weekly mean precipitation forecasts for March 30, 2026 – April 6, 2026 and April 6, 2026 – April 13, 2026, as of March 27, 2026



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

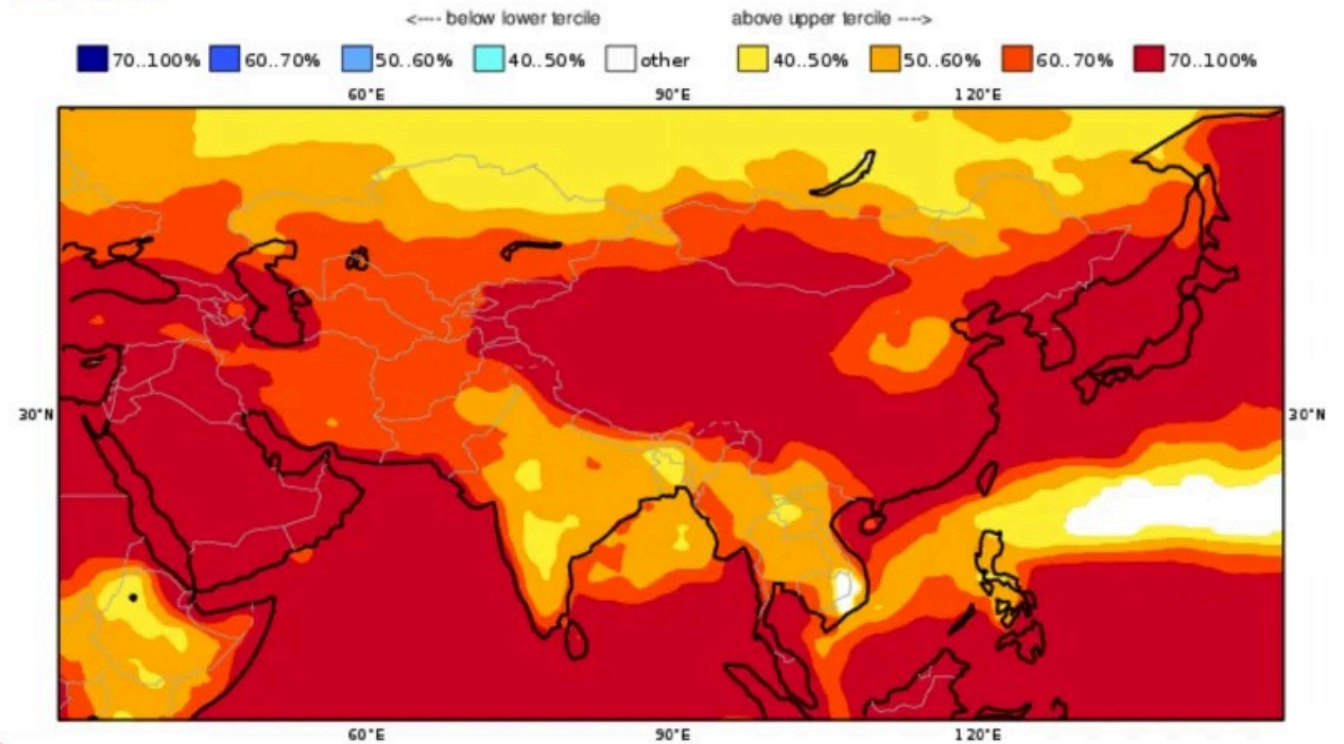
Source: ECMWF Forecast System

Temperature

Long-term forecasts for April-June 2026 indicate a high probability of above-average temperatures through the 2025/26 main agricultural season harvest period (**Figures 7**).

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

C3S multi-system seasonal forecast ECMWF/Met Office/Météo-France/CMCC/DWD/NCEP/ECCC/BOM
 Prob(most likely category of 2m temperature) AMJ 2026
 Nominal forecast start: 01/03/26
 Unweighted mean



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Source: Copernicus Climate Change Service

Crops, orchards, pastures and rangelands

According to field informants, stressed rainfed crops and pasture conditions were reported from northwest, north, central, and southern parts of the country during first half of March. As a result of widespread precipitation received during late March, there are no reports of adverse crop conditions. Spring wheat planting is on track, and if precipitation remains higher than usual through mid-April. The harvest of wheat, especially in the southeastern parts of the country, is anticipated to begin in May; however, excessive precipitation during this period is undesirable for early sown wheat that is currently close to harvest. The outlook for regional wheat and pasture health in the coming months is expected to be normal due to forecasts of countrywide precipitation in April. About 15-20% of almond trees in the country's almond-growing belt were reported to have been affected by frost during February 2026

Recommended citation: FEWS NET. Afghanistan Seasonal Monitor April 6, 2026: Favorable March precipitation supports spring wheat planting, 2026.

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](#).