



**Thirty fifth Session of South Asian Climate Outlook Forum
(SASCOF-35) and Climate Services User Forum (CSUF)
24 September & 1st October 2026 (Held online)**

**SASCOF-35 Outlook for the 2026 October to December
Season Rainfall and Temperature over South Asia**

Summary

Normal to above-normal rainfall is likely over the northwestern parts of South Asia and parts of eastern and southern South Asia, including the island nations. Below-normal rainfall is likely over most parts of central and southern peninsular South Asia and some parts of eastern South Asia. The remaining parts of the region are likely to experience climatological probabilities for seasonal rainfall. During the season, normal to above normal maximum and minimum temperatures are likely over most parts of the South Asia.

This consensus climate outlook for the 2026 OND season over South Asia has been derived using an objective approach based on an initial set of forecasts from multiple GCMs, and subsequently consolidated through consensus-building discussions among climate experts, taking into account the prevailing global climate conditions influencing the South Asian climate. Currently, very strong El Niño conditions are observed over the equatorial Pacific, while neutral Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions prevail over the Indian Ocean. These large-scale climate drivers are known to influence climate variability across South Asia. The latest forecasts from several climate models indicate an increased likelihood of very strong El Niño conditions persisting during the forthcoming OND season, along with a continued likelihood of neutral IOD conditions.

In developing the seasonal outlook, due consideration is also given to other relevant regional and global climate factors, as well as intra-seasonal variability, which may influence rainfall and temperature patterns across the region. For more detailed information and further updates on the seasonal climate outlook at the national level, users are advised to consult the respective National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs).

Introduction:

The southern parts of South Asia receive significant amounts of rainfall during the October to December (OND) season, which is critical for agricultural operations. The re-establishment of a northeasterly trade-wind regime over South Asia associated with the southward movement of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) ushers in the Northeast monsoon, bringing much-needed rainfall to the southern parts of India, Sri Lanka, and Maldives. The October to November period in Sri Lanka is known as the second Inter Monsoon (SIM) season. It has been recognized that there is moderate seasonal predictability for the northeast monsoon circulation over the region as the seasonal variability is strongly influenced by the slowly varying boundary forcings, such as sea surface temperatures. However, the predictability is somewhat limited due to the strong day-to-day atmospheric variability caused by the passage of the synoptic scale weather systems such as easterly waves, lows, depressions, cyclones, etc. The seasonal predictability of the northeast monsoon over the region is also influenced by the Madden-Julian Oscillation (MJO), which represents the major global scale intra-seasonal variability pattern.

The climate outlook for the 2026 October to December season was finalized during the thirty-fifth session of the South Asian Climate Outlook Forum (SASCOF-35) held on 24th September 2026 and 1st October 2026 via video conferencing. The session was attended by experts representing the National Meteorological and Hydrological Services (NMHSs) of all nine South Asian countries, as well as experts from several global and regional climate agencies, including the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), WMO Regional Climate Centre (RCC), Pune, the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM), the UK Met Office (UKMO), the International Research Institute for Climate and Society (IRI), the Regional Integrated Multi-Hazard Early Warning System (RIMES), the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA), and the Climate Prediction Center (CPC), among others. The online forum deliberated on various observed and emerging climate forcings that are known to influence the climate variability of the region such as the El Niño/Southern Oscillation (ENSO) conditions over the equatorial Pacific, Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions over the Indian Ocean, etc. The key features of these climate forcings are briefly discussed below.

Conditions over the Pacific Ocean

The ENSO is one of the global scale climate forcings that significantly influence the year-to-year variability of the northeast monsoon rainfall and the surface temperatures over South Asia. The sea surface temperatures are above average in the eastern equatorial Pacific Ocean. Currently, very strong El Niño conditions are observed over the equatorial Pacific. Latest forecasts from many climate models indicate an enhanced probability of very strong El Niño conditions during the upcoming OND season.

Conditions over the Indian Ocean

In addition to ENSO conditions over the Pacific, other factors, such as Indian Ocean sea surface temperatures, influence the region's climate variability. Above-average sea surface temperatures (SSTs) are currently seen across most of the Indian Ocean. Currently, neutral Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) conditions prevail over the Indian Ocean. The latest model forecast indicates that the neutral IOD conditions will likely continue for the next OND season.

SASCOF Outlook for the 2026 October to December Season Rainfall over South Asia:

A consensus outlook for October to December season rainfall over South Asia has been prepared based on the expert assessment of prevailing large-scale global climate indicators mentioned above and experimental as well as operational long-range forecasts based on statistical and dynamical models generated by various operational and research centers of the world. There is unanimity among the experts that the very strong El Niño conditions in the equatorial Pacific Ocean will continue during the upcoming OND season, and the neutral Indian Ocean Dipole conditions over the Indian Ocean are likely to continue during the October to December season. The relative impact of all these parameters needs to be considered to determine the expected state of the climate over the region during the season.

The outlook for the 2026 October to December season rainfall over South Asia is shown in **Fig.1a**. The figure illustrates the most likely tercile category¹ as well as its probability for each of the 1° latitude x 1° longitude spatial grid boxes over the region. The dotted area shown in the map climatologically receives very low rainfall and experiences dry weather during the OND season. The box-wise tercile probabilities were derived using an objective approach from an initial set of

gridded forecasts from multiple GCMs and consolidated through a consensus-building discussion among climate experts.

The outlook suggests that during the 2026 October to December (OND) season, normal to above-normal rainfall is likely over northwestern parts of South Asia and parts of eastern and southern South Asia, including the Maldives and Sri Lanka. Below-normal rainfall is likely over most parts of central and southern peninsular South Asia and some parts of eastern South Asia. The remaining parts of the region are likely to experience climatological probabilities for seasonal rainfall.

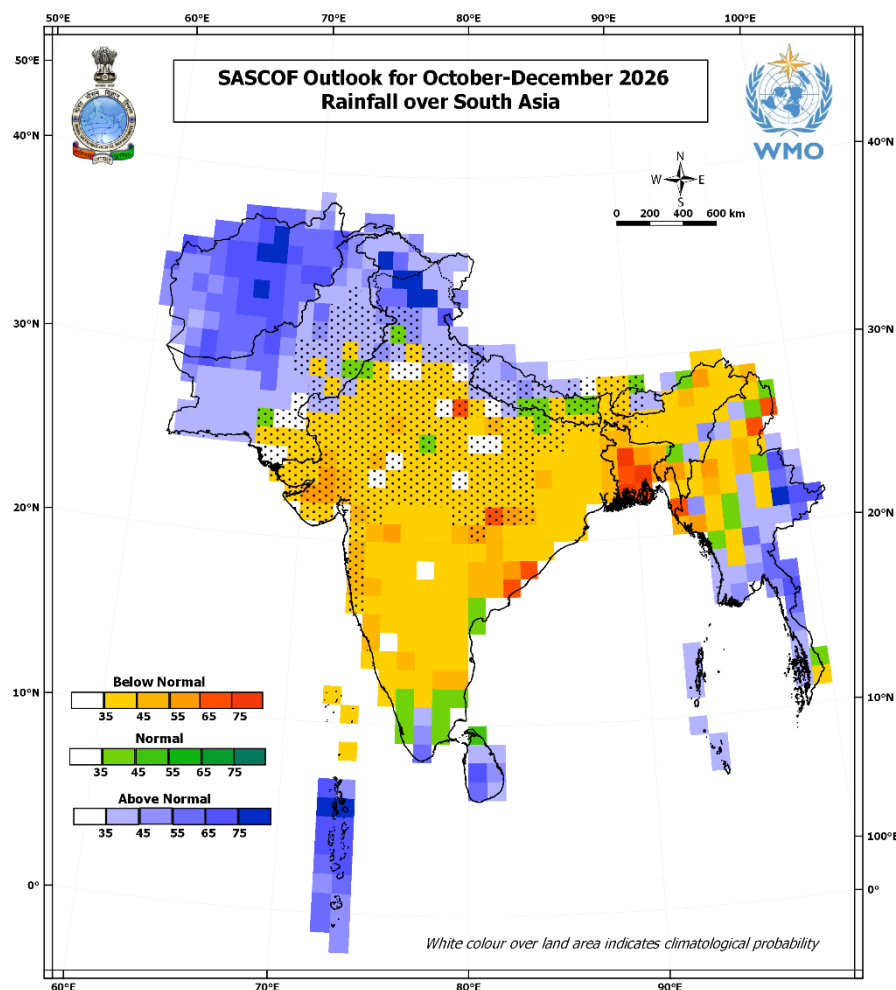
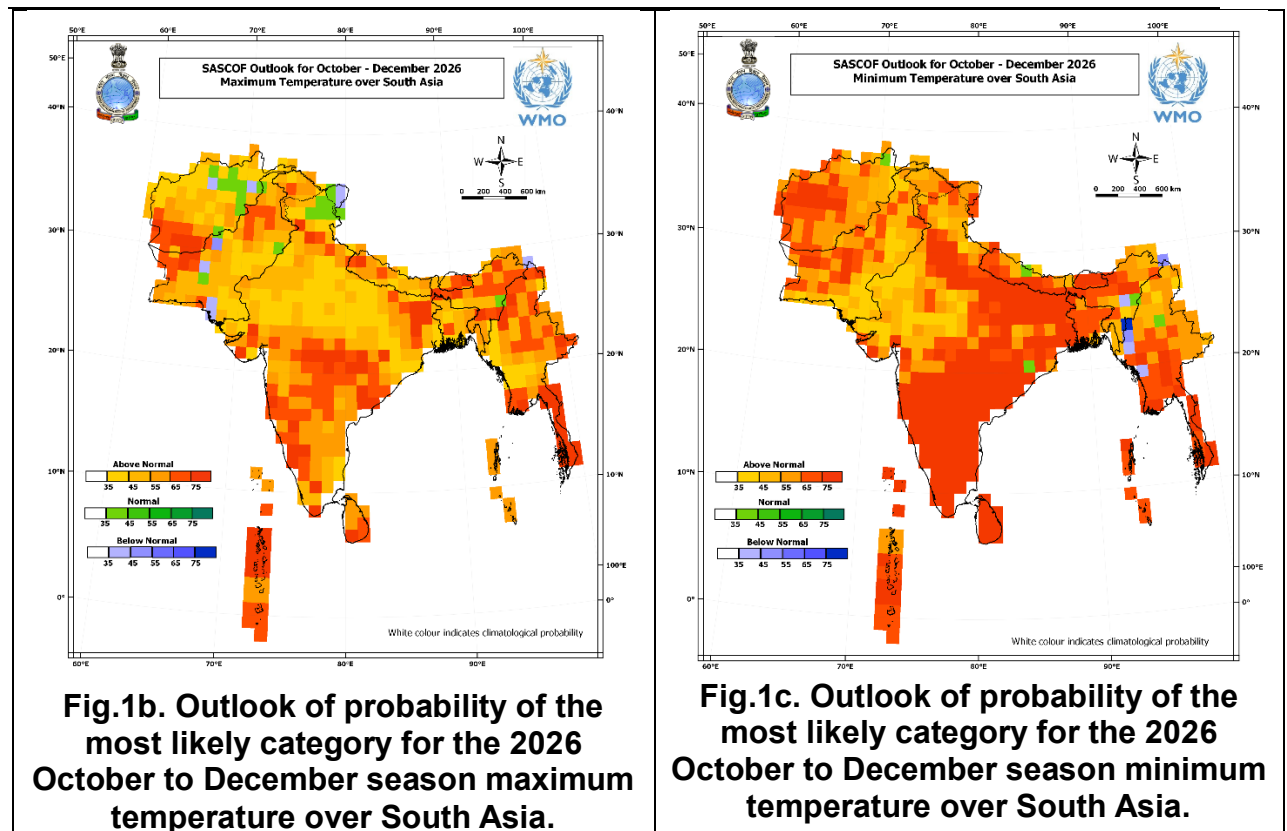


Fig.1a. Outlook for 2026 October to December season Rainfall over South Asia. The dotted area shown in the map climatologically receives very low rainfall and experiences dry weather during the OND season.

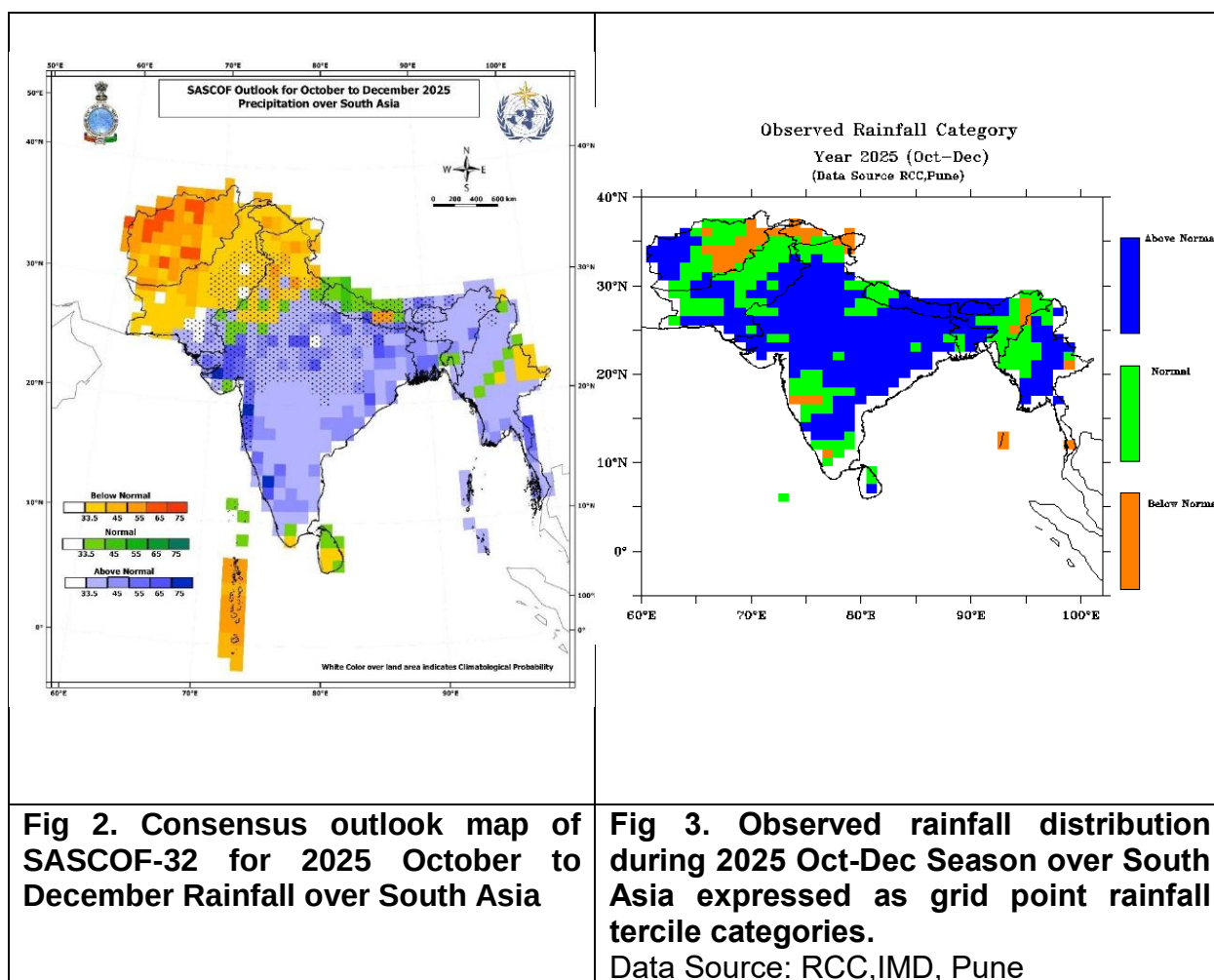
Tercile categories have equal climatological probabilities, of 33.33% each

The consensus outlook for the 2026 October to December maximum and minimum temperature over South Asia is shown in **Fig.1b and 1c**. During the season,

normal-to-above-normal maximum and minimum temperatures are likely over most parts of South Asia.



Verification of consensus outlook for 2025 October to December season

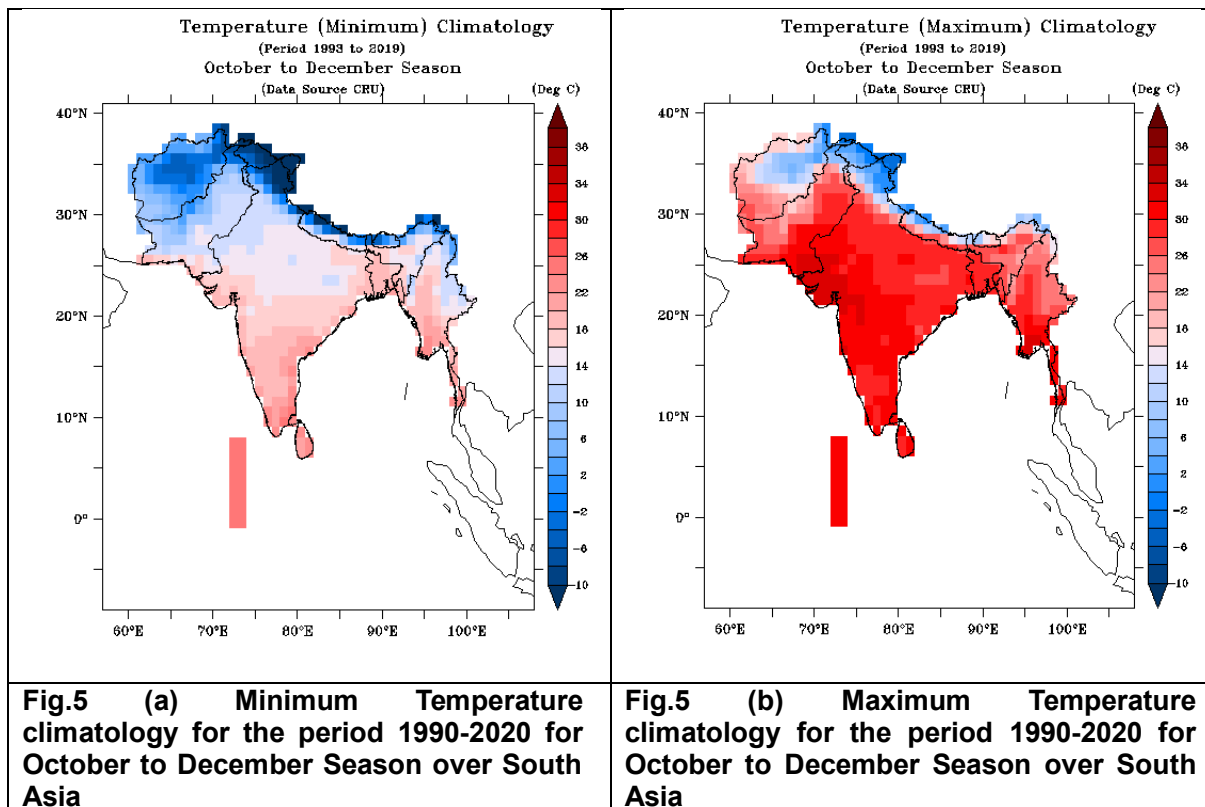
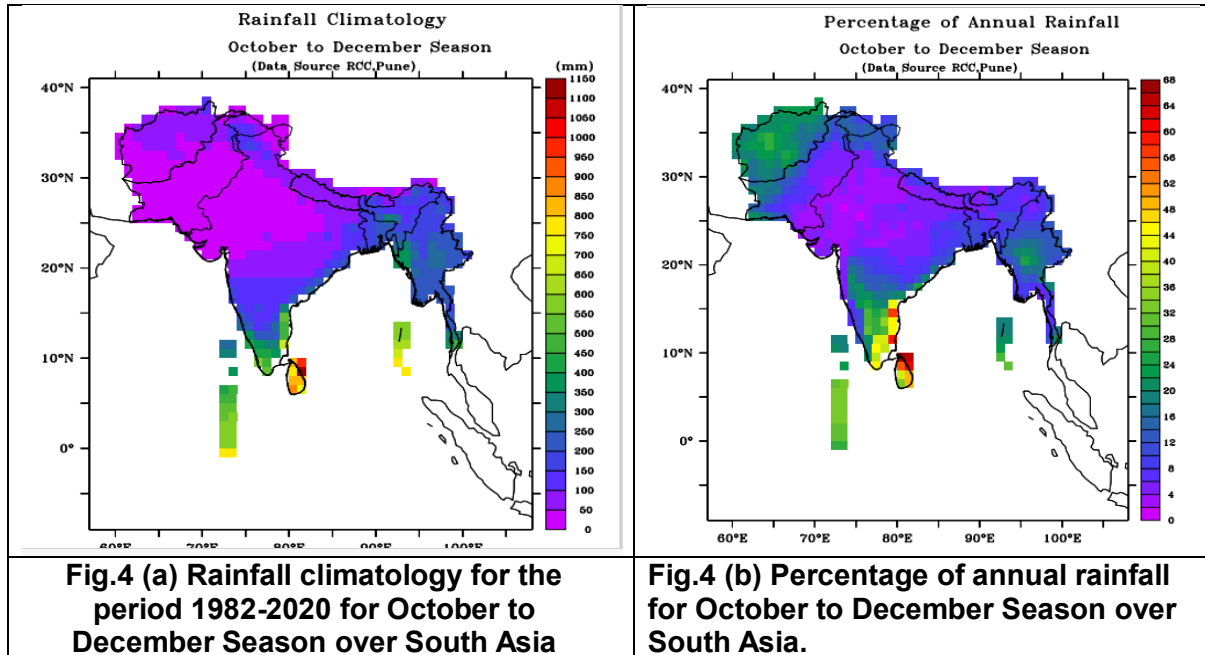


The consensus forecast outlook map (Fig.2) for the 2025 October to December season shows above-normal rainfall across much of central, eastern, and southern South Asia. The northwestern parts of the region, certain areas in the south—including the island nations—and a few isolated pockets in the eastern part of the South Asia showed normal to below-normal rainfall.

Fig. 3 shows the observed rainfall distribution during the 2025 October to December Season expressed in terms of tercile categories. Most of the South Asia region received above normal rainfall during 2025 October to December Season, However below normal rainfall received over some parts of the northwestern part of the region. From the above Figures 2 & 3, It can see that the SASCOF-32 outlook match very well with observation for most of the region.

The long-term historical patterns of the rainfall over South Asia during October to December Season (Fig.4 a & b), characterized by remarkable spatial variability,

provide the general reference points at the respective locations for the rainfall anomalies indicated in the outlook.



The long-term historical patterns of the Temperature (Minimum and Maximum) over South Asia during October to December (Fig.5 a & b), characterized by large spatial

variability, provide the general reference points at the respective locations for the temperature anomalies indicated in the outlook.