

# Covid 19 corollaries

December 3, 2020

## Rabi on a roll

Sowing for the rabi, or winter, crop season had already covered 348 lakh hectare (ha) by November 27, 2020. That is 4% more than in the whole of the previous season and 2% above the average of the past five years (see chart).

Clearly, rabi sowing has been spurred by abundant rains this year: an overall 9% above-normal monsoon has led to high soil moisture and 19% higher reservoir levels compared with the average of the past five years.

Timely kharif harvest has also ensured rabi sowing was dot on schedule.

So will the momentum sustain for the full sowing season, which starts in November and stretches to end-January?

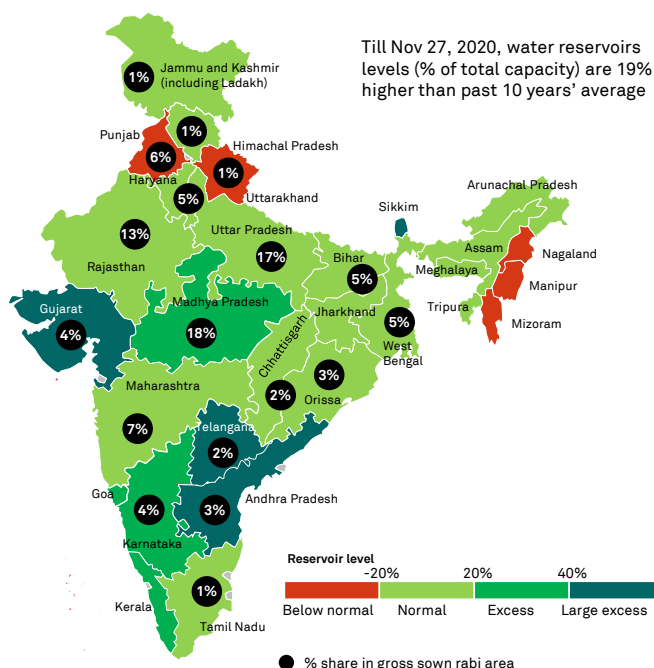
Last year, kharif harvest was delayed, so acreage growth under rabi was on a low base till November 2019. But from December, sowing picked up. Hence, rabi sowing for the current season will be up against the high base from last December.

Net-net, we expect current rabi sowing (corresponding to marketing year, or January-December 2021) to be 2% more than the all-time high of 662 lakh ha seen in the previous marketing year.

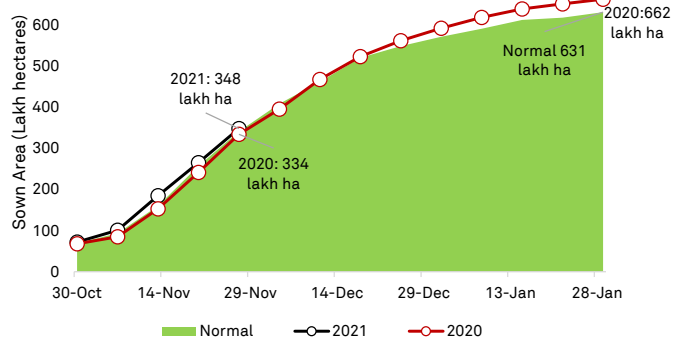
However, there is a worry: After Cyclone Nivar, another storm 'Burevi' is likely to hit Tamil Nadu in first week of December. It could damage ongoing rabi sowing of pulses in the state if it turns out to be severe.

### Rabi sowing up by 4% on-year\*on a low base

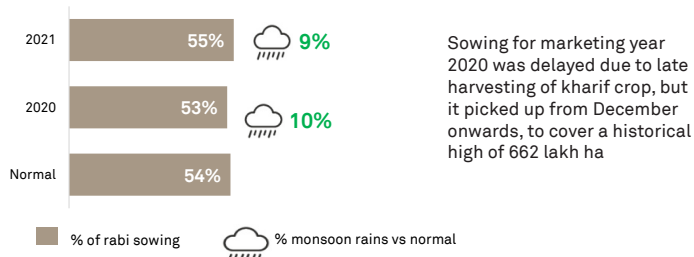
High soil moisture, higher reservoir levels and timely kharif harvest have aided rabi sowing



CRISIL expects full-season rabi sowing^ to be 2% higher on-year due to high base from December onwards



### Rabi sowing as % of total normal acreage (till Nov 27, 2020)



Source: IMD, Ministry of Agriculture, CRISIL Research

\*Till Nov 27, 2020; ^Rabi sowing season is usually between November through Jan-end of the next year; all years denote marketing year (Jan-Dec); for e.g., rabi sown in 2020 will be considered in marketing year 2021, as it is marketed between March to June; 'normal' in sowing refers to average of past 5 years