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# 30 years DownToEarth

Founded in 1992 to arm you with knowledge critical to shaping a better world

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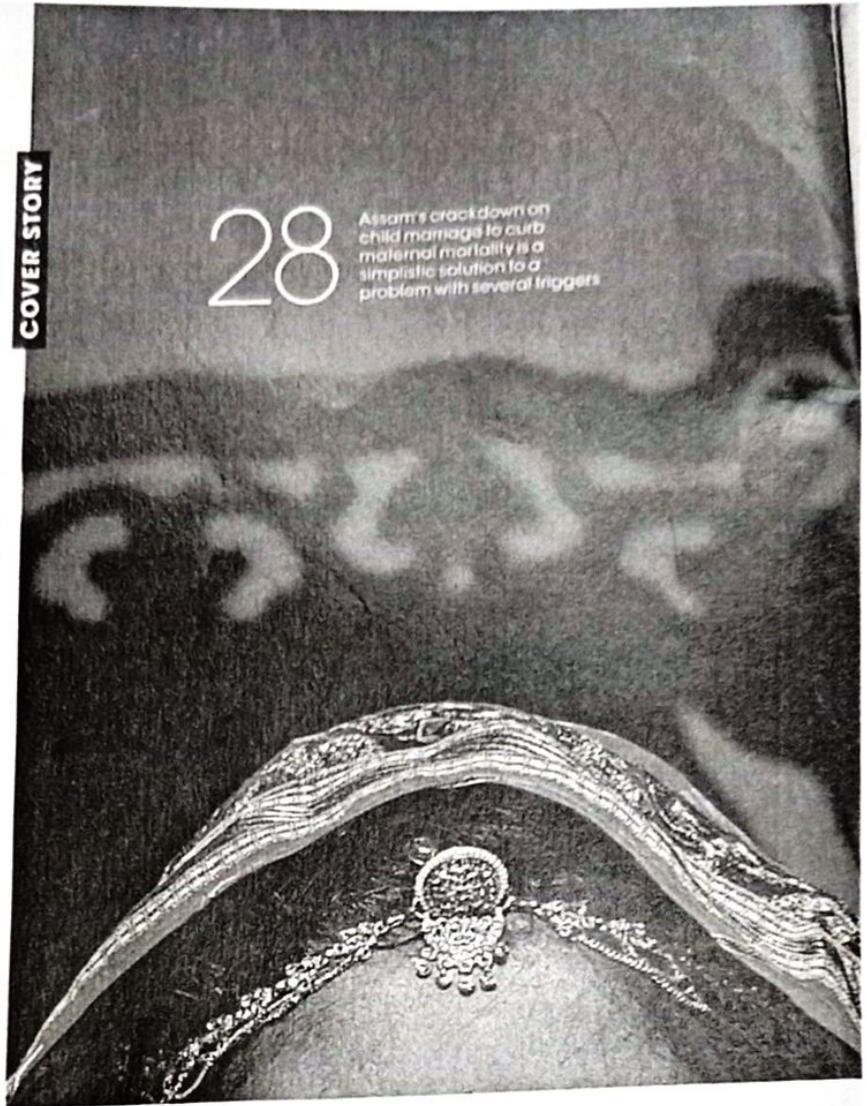
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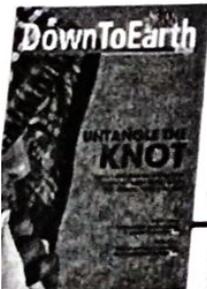
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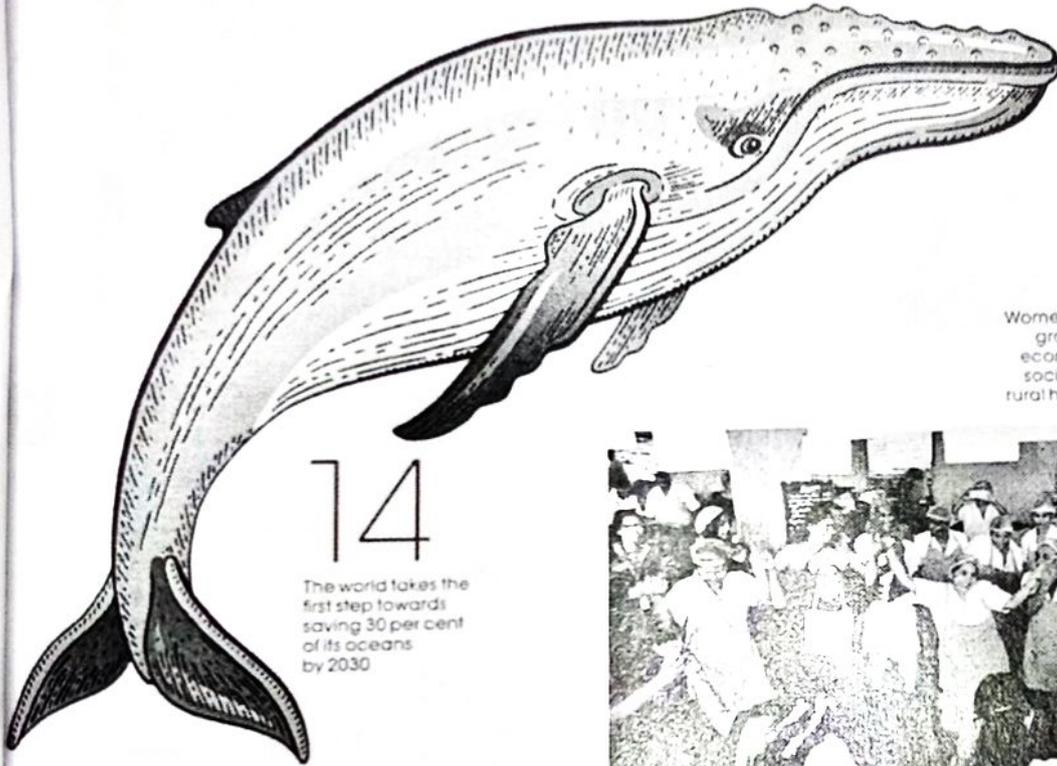
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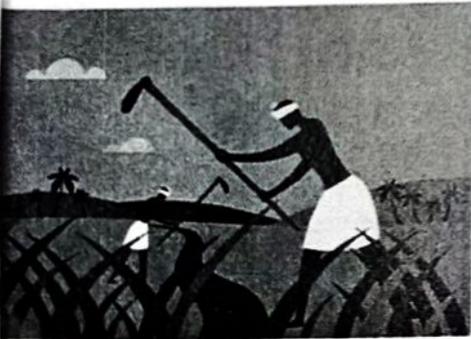


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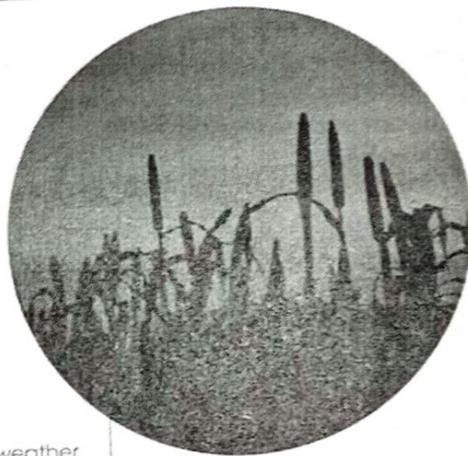
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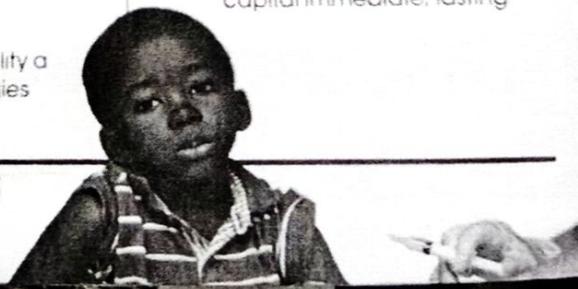
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# Engage



## Sagely advice

This is in reference to "Planned disaster" (1-15 March, 2023). Sunita Narain has written that when she was a member of the high-level government committee to discuss future projects, she advised them to deviate from the path of trying to control the flow of river water artificially and constructing multiple dams at Joshimath. She wrote and has repeated that the Indian Institute of Technology-Roorkee engineers manipulated the data in favour of the policymakers. Not paying heed to such timely advice and suggestions has resulted in the present calamity. Such disastrous and catastrophic actions are regularly undertaken either for someone's profit or to show that development is taking place. But this comes at the cost of common people's well-being.

**AJU MUKHOPADHYAY  
PUDUCHERRY**

## Talk about missing the big picture

This refers to "Jharkhand Farmers wait through the night to apply for drought relief scheme", published online on December 12, 2022. Have we totally lost the capacity to analyse the problems? If there were sufficient drought compensations all over India for all growers, would that make things fine? What about the fact that the produce was too much one year, too little the next year, and so on, because of monsoonal variations? Compensations are required because the quantity of the harvested produce is too less for the growers to earn a living. That is because even in 2022-23, we largely depend on the nature-controlled monsoons for agriculture, whereas the entire world has migrated to human-controlled irrigation mechanisms decades ago. What is the point of boasting to be an agrarian economy when we do not bother to utilise modern methods of agriculture? It would be interesting to

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**'Professor of Practice'**

10 In light of the National Education Policy 2020, this article critically examines the implications of the "professor of practice" scheme. — *D R Gautam, C M Malish & Kedilezo Kikhi*

**Inflation Theory Comes Full Circle**

14 A public interchange among some leading macroeconomists suggests a change in the way inflation is perceived by the profession. — *Pulapre Balakrishnan, M Parameswaran*

**Meghalaya Assembly Elections 2023**

16 The possibility of another hung assembly in Meghalaya looms large with no single party apparently looking capable of winning a majority of seats and no prepoll alliances so far. — *Susmita Sen Gupta*

**Taxation of Non-fungible Tokens**

18 India took its first step towards regulating non-fungible tokens when the Finance Bill of 2022 was introduced. — *Niharika Salar, Anindya Sircar*

**Beyond the Paternity of Caste**

24 The Dalit Muslim/Dalit Christian opposition to the stipulation of religion in the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order of 1950 is a critical chapter in the postcolonial history of India. — *Nidhin Donald, Asha Singh*

**Investigating the Role of Remittances**

33 The Census 2011 estimated the presence of 450 million internal migrants in India, which is an increase of 45% over the Census 2001. As a corollary, the domestic flow of remittances has seen a significant rise. This paper aims to understand how financial support affects the perceived economic well-being of households in rural India. — *Shreya Nupur, Meghna Dutta*

**Revenue Shortfall and GST Compensation**

40 The states that will suffer the maximum revenue impact if the expected goods and services tax collections do not improve in the coming years, are identified in this paper. The pre- and post-GST buoyancy of the states is compared to understand the possible outcome. The likely revenue requirement for servicing the accumulated special market borrowings of the union government is assessed. — *Sacchidananda Mukherjee*

**Industrial Pollution and Health Damage**

47 The Singrauli region produces 16% of coal and 13% of thermal power in India. Various state and non-state institutions have examined the consequent regional pollution. This paper attempts to document the health damage to the regional population. A survey of 4,383 families in southern Sonbhadra district yielded data on select health impacts, which were then mapped to correlate to the industrial gaseous emissions. — *Vasudha A*

**Tracing the Geographies of Inequality in India**

57 Spatial, that is, geographic inequalities are growing in India and other countries. Some countries are better provided with services, infrastructure, and earning opportunities. The urban-rural difference is salient to these distinctions. However, locating the geographies of advantage and disadvantage requires going below the level of states and beyond the binary of urban-rural distinction. — *Anirudh Krishna, Rajesh Shukla*

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**Blindsiding the Informally Employed**

10 The COVID-19 lockdown worsened the already depressed labour markets for the informal workers, as it affected their employment, incomes, savings, and well-being. — *Anuradha Kalhan, Shamsheer Singh & Kiran Moghe*

**Banks' Expected Credit Loss Provisions**

15 Banks can effectively utilise the internal credit-rating migration trend to predict the future risk of default for corporate loans. — *Arindam Bandyopadhyay*

**'Industry 4.0' Narrative and Its Implications**

19 Getting entrapped in the big tech-driven "industry 4.0" narrative and its neo-liberal interpretations will severely curtail India's ability to reduce forex drain from its digital consumer economy. — *Smitha Francis*

**Indian Masculinity Exposed**

25 The blatant agreement on the statement, "contraceptive is women's business," serves as an evidence of masculinity in the reproductive sphere. — *U S Mishra, Pradeep S Salve*

**Zero-budget Natural Farming**

27 The various issues relating to zero-budget natural farming are discussed, and viable measures to double the farmers' income are suggested. — *A Narayanamoorthy, P Alli*

**Estimating Demand Elasticities of Pulses**

36 All pulses are disaggregated by major pulses to estimate their income and price elasticities in the Indian context. Different pulses behave differently in their consumption patterns in the food basket, and some of them might not be easily substitutable because of strong regional preferences. A pulse model to compute demand elasticities of pulses at the disaggregate level is estimated. — *Praduman Kumar, Surabhi Mittal & P K Joshi*

**Income Inequality**

44 Utilising unit-level data from the India Human Development Surveys, income inequalities in India and in 17 major states for 2004-05 and 2011-12 are estimated. Income inequality was generally high and was rising during the years, notwithstanding some declines in a few states. Income inequalities among Indians are unlikely to be narrowed down on their own. — *Mofidul Hassan, M P Bezbaruah*

**Understanding High Mortality among Private Facility Births**

52 Approximately one in five births of rural Uttar Pradesh residents takes place in a private facility. These births experience a stunningly high neonatal mortality rate of 53 deaths per 1,000, compared to 32 among births in public facilities, and 40 among home births. This paper seeks to understand why mortality rates are higher in private facilities than public facilities. — *Nikhil Srivastav, Lovey Pant, Aditi Priya & Diane Coffey*

**Postscript**

63 *V K Karthika* on the all-women *Pentholppavakkoth* troupe and challenging patriarchy; *Vignesh Sathish* on the meanings of political cinema; *Snigdha Konar* on how Sheng Keyi's novel *Northern Girls* challenges the mainstream narratives of China's economic growth; and Last Lines by *Ponnappa*.

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**Monetary Policy Debates and Deglobalisation**

10 This article is the second in a series of articles on monetary policy debates in the age when deglobalisation became a buzzword. — *Hasan Cömert, T Sabri Öncü*

**Fostering an Independent Bar**

14 Concerns have emerged on the independence of the bar, since it is the source of appointments to judges at the high court, who then go on to become Supreme Court judges. — *Alok Prasanna Kumar*

**ICT and Female Labour Market Participation**

16 Adoption of information and communication technology leads to improvement in employment measures only for urban women. — *Ritika Jain, Tirtha Chatterjee*

**Household Pharmaceutical Disposal Practices**

18 Action towards scientific planning and management of pharmaceutical waste by controlling it from its source is necessary. — *Sanju Kaladharan, Dhanya M & Rejikumar G*

**Dalit Sikh Settlers in Shillong**

23 In North East India, the indigenous assertion and mobilisation of various ethnic communities often lead to the dislocation and impoverishment of the settled minority communities. — *V Bijukumar*

**Public Order, Sedition, and Freedom of Speech**

33 Post-independence judicial rulings on the right to freedom of speech and expression have produced two contradictory lines of precedents on the restriction of "public order" under Article 19(2). The underlying question at stake in either case, however, is that of determining the exercisable limits of an average Indian's rationality within the public sphere. — *Ratika Gaur*

**Amenities, Ailments, and Health Spending**

40 The pattern of diseases that comes about due to inadequate availability and poor quality of drinking water as well as substandard sanitation and micro-environmental facilities in the slums of Lucknow are investigated in this paper. The poorest sections of the urban population of Lucknow spend almost a third of their consumption expenditure on out-of-pocket expenditure. — *Sanatan Nayak, Surendra Singh Jatav*

**North-South Divide in Kerala**

49 There is a considerable difference existing between Malabar and Travancore-Cochin in terms of living standards and key infrastructural facilities. The multidimensional poverty index has also revealed that the incidence of poverty is high in northern Kerala as compared to southern Kerala. The Malabar region still lags behind the Travancore-Cochin region in some key aspects. — *Annamary Jose, Lakshmi Kumar*

**Corporatisation in Private Hospitals Sector**

57 Transformation in the Indian private hospitals sector is examined in Maharashtra. Policy shifts towards greater private sector involvement in health, industry advocacy, availability of insurance, and patient expectations drive these changes towards corporatisation, which is not just about the growth of corporate hospitals. — *Indira Chakravarthi, Benjamin Hunter, Shweta Marathe & Susan F Murray*

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## China in West Asia and Beyond

10 The Chinese-mediated agreement between Iran and Saudi Arabia will re-establish diplomatic relations between the two countries. — *Anuradha M Chenoy*

## Budget 2023–24: An Introduction and Overview

13 A sustained reduction in debt and deficit at the union level is critical for a fast improvement in the general government fiscal balance. — *Pinaki Chakraborty*

## Independent Fiscal Councils

15 An appropriate balance between fiscal rules and discretionary development spending is critical for macro stability. — *Y V Reddy, Pinaki Chakraborty*

## Electoral Cycle and the Union Budget 2023–24

18 The fiscal deficit and expenditure composition in a pre-election budget capture the net effect of the compulsion of reducing taxes and levies, and spending more, particularly on welfare measures. — *Ashok K Lahiri*

## Concerns about Balancing Growth and Stability

22 Union Budget 2023–24 attempts to strike a balance between accelerating growth and achieving fiscal consolidation. — *M Govinda Rao*

## Union Budget 2023–24: The Long View

27 Consolidation is necessary, but so is stimulus. The budget ably attempts both through gradual deficit reduction and better expenditure composition. — *Ashima Goyal*

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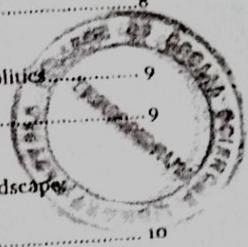
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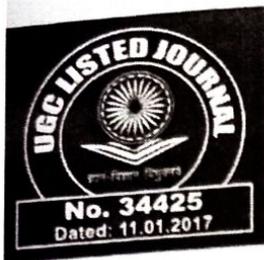
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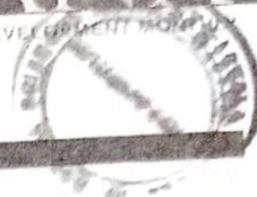
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