



HT PICKS



MUMBAI CONFIDENTIAL
Saurav Mohapatra and Vivek Shinde;
Inked
₹916, PP144

3 SECTIONS

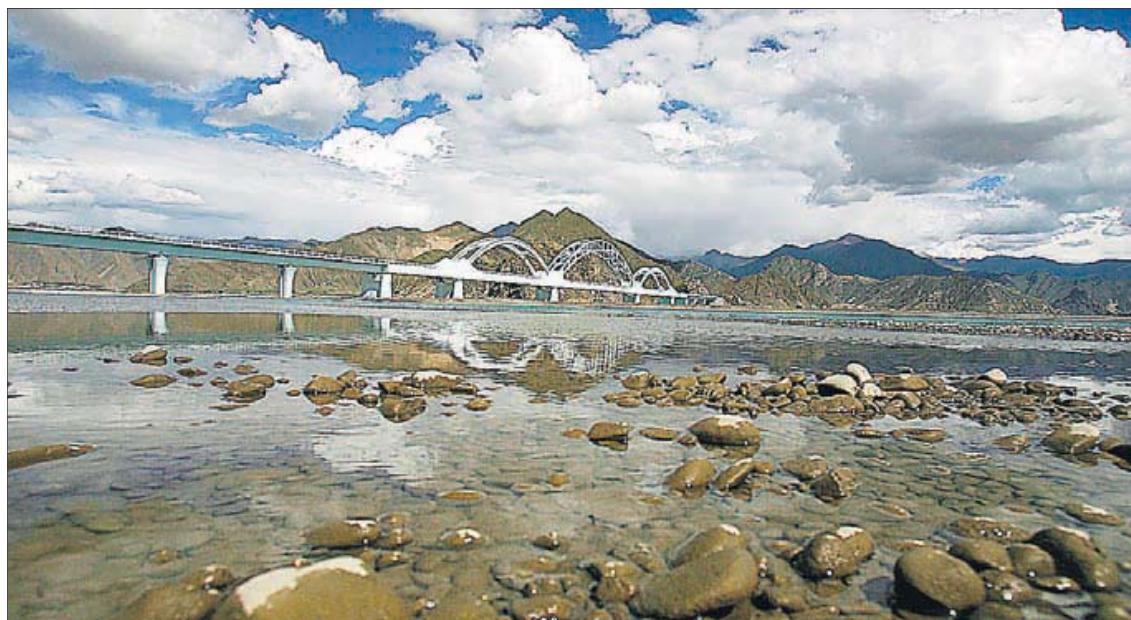
Vijay Seshadri;
Harper Collins
₹299, PP67



SHIKHANDI AND OTHER TALES
Devdutt Pattanaik;
Zubaan/Penguin;
₹299, PP179

HT-NIELSEN BOOKSCAN TOP 10

NON-FICTION	1 The Monk Who Sold His Ferrari Robin S Sharma JAICO PUB HOUSE	2 India 2014 MINISTRY OF INFORMATION & BROADCASTING GRP	3 Wings of Fire Tiwari, Arun and Kalam UNIVERSITIES PRESS	4 The Accidental Prime Minister Sanjaya Baru VIKING	5 Who Will Cry When You Die? Robin S Sharma JAICO PUB HOUSE	6 The Secret Rhonda Byrne SIMON & SCHUSTER	7 Who Moved My Cheese? Spencer Johnson RANDOM HOUSE	8 History of Modern India Bipan Chandra ORIENT BLACKSWAN	9 Don't Lose Out, Work Out! Rujuta Diwekar TRANQUEBAR PRESS	10 I Am Malala Malala Yousafzai & Christina Laorion ORION
FICTION	1 The Fault In Our Stars John Green PENGUIN	2 When Only Love Remains Durjoy Datta PENGUIN	3 Life is What You Make It Preeti Shenoy SRISHTI	4 Revolution 2020 Chetan Bhagat RUPA & CO	5 I Too Had A Love Story Ravinder Singh PENGUIN INDIA	6 The Oath of the Vayuputras Amish Tripathi WESTLAND	7 The Inferno Dan Brown CORGI BOOKS	8 The Secret of the Nagas Amish Tripathi WESTLAND	9 The three Mistakes of My Life Chetan Bhagat RUPA & CO	10 The Alchemist Paul Coelho HARPER COLLINS



DON'T BLOCK THE TAP

Michael Buckley points out that China's relentless exploitation of Tibet's resources could spell environmental disaster for Asia

Thubten Samphel
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The Dalai Lama was the first to suggest that tackling Tibet's looming environmental crisis deserves precedence over efforts to resolve its protracted political problem. According to WikiLeaks, in a meeting between the Dalai Lama and the American ambassador to India, Timothy J Roemer, on 10 August 2009 in New Delhi, the Tibetan spiritual leader recommended that America lead the international community to engage China on climate change in Tibet. The Dalai Lama said that Tibetans could wait five to ten years for a political solution to the issue of Tibet. Melting glaciers, deforestation and increasingly polluted water from rampant mining were problems that 'cannot wait.' These mounting environmental challenges on the Roof of the World are the focus of Michael Buckley's stunning new book, *Meltdown in Tibet*, to be launched in November. *Meltdown* joins a growing chorus of voices that cry foul on China's development juggernaut rolling across the Tibetan plateau, triggering deforestation, increased flooding downstream, permafrost melting and polluted rivers. In his groundbreaking study, *Water: Asia's New Battleground*, Brahma Chellaney, says water is Asia's new oil. River waters of Tibet are Asia's lifeline. Buckley, a travel writer and an environmentalist, brings this chorus to a higher pitch. His book draws attention to the critical importance of Tibet's environment to the sustainability of development of Asia and even to the survival of the continent's billions who live downstream. Buckley's argument is that Asia can ignore what China is doing in Tibet at its own peril. He says, "We have only one Tibet. There are no backups, no second chances. If the water

CHINA IS RE-ENGINEERING TIBET'S ENVIRONMENTAL LANDSCAPE TO FACILITATE THE EXPLOITATION OF ITS MINERAL RESOURCES AND GUZZLE ITS WATER.

resources of the Tibetan plateau should be blocked or diverted or become polluted, then Asia will tumble into chaos." Tibet is the world's highest and largest plateau consisting of 2.5 million sq km, stretching 2,400km from west to east and 1,448 from north to south. Tibet's average elevation is 4,000m from sea level and its mountains thrust almost three miles up into the sky. Its rarefied air makes the Asian monsoon. Tibet is the world's Third Pole and Asia's Water Tower, being the repository of the largest concentration of glaciers outside of the two poles. These glaciers feed Asia's ten major river systems that originate from Tibet and sustain more than two billions downstream. The reality is that China, firmly ensconced in Tibet, has its determined but unpredictable hand on Asia's water tap. China is re-engineering Tibet's environmental landscape to facilitate the exploitation of its mineral resources and guzzle its water. China completed linking Lhasa by railway line in 2006 on permafrost ground that has become increasingly unstable because of the steady warming of the plateau. It now plans to expand its railway line network to neighbouring Nepal. Beijing is also on a massive dam-building programme in regions of high seismic activity. China's south-north water diversion project includes plans to dam the Brahmaputra River to generate hydroelectric power and divert it to meet the water needs of north China. Mining across Tibet is polluting the rivers with deadly consequences for the fishery

industries in South-east Asia. In Tibet environmental protests over poisoned river waters, unheard of before, have erupted only to be crushed. An estimated 2.5 million Tibetan nomads have been sequestered in permanent housing structures. The grasslands where they and their herds of yaks once roamed freely are now the target of mining companies.

Amidst these scenes of environmental doom and gloom, of impending ecological apocalypse, Buckley finds a *beyul*, a hidden valley and a sanctuary of environmental protection. He says, "The kingdom of Bhutan has some tremendous advantages over its neighbors. Its population is tiny — under a million. Its people do not need to be convinced about the value of conservation: they follow a sect of Tibetan Buddhism that imbues respect for nature. There is minimal mining and industry, so no real sources of pollution. Here's the lucky part: Bhutan has abundant water resources. Most of its rivers rise on the Bhutanese side of the Himalayan range, although a few transboundary rivers course in from Tibet. Bhutan's real bliss is to be upstream and not having to deal with China: most of Bhutan's economy is linked to India."

Buckley believes Asia should make a collective effort to persuade China to account for Tibet's receding glaciers, shrinking grasslands and reduced and polluted water flows in rivers that originate from Tibet. The author's point is that Tibet will become an all-Asia problem if corrective actions are not taken. And the most effective corrective action is for all of Asia to form a united front to persuade China to give autonomy to the Tibetan people. Restoring the Tibetan people once again to being the stewards of the Tibetan plateau which they have done with responsibility for thousands of years will resolve Asia's water problem. With deep reverence for the innate sacredness and sanctity of their home which they refer to as "the Land of Snows," the Tibetan people have nurtured the plateau sustainably down the ages. For the sake of Tibet and for the environmental good of China and Asia, Tibetans deserve the right to become responsible stewards of Tibet again within a prosperous and confident China.

*Thubten Samphel is the director of the Tibet Policy Institute, a research centre of the Central Tibetan Administration and author of *Falling Through the Roof*, a work of fiction

READ

THE PERFECT PITCH

Freelance journalism involves juggling deep existential crises and chasing people for tiny sums but it also offers you the freedom to work in your pyjamas!

Kavitha Rao
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About 18 years ago, I worked as a legal correspondent for the Economic Times in Mumbai, my first job in journalism. I scuttled from one courtroom to another covering corporate wrongdoing, all the while wishing I could write on books, art, travel, anything more interesting than Section 149, subsection 12, of The Companies Act. I didn't know freelancing existed, but if I had, I would have thought of it as something housewives did from home, badly paid, poorly respected, definitely second best.

Years later, I am now a freelancer. This month I wrote about mutton, the military, motherhood, a new documentary film, sexual education, an Istanbul food tour and JK Rowling's new novel. I have written for magazines in the US, UK, the UAE, Scandinavia, and Hong Kong. I do all this sitting in Bangalore and working in my pyjamas. I am still badly paid and poorly respected, but I no longer think freelancing is second best.

Does this make you want to quit your job and write? Hold your horses. It's not entirely the artistic profession you think it is. I see myself not so much as a creative, but as-oh dreadful thought!-a salesperson. Yes, I am more or less the writing equivalent of those chaps who go door to door selling the Encyclopaedia Britannia. Freelancing means pitching editors every week for work. Freelancing means deep existential crises, "If an editor does not reply to your pitch, are you a real journalist?" Freelancing means either being absolutely frantic with work or frantic for work. Freelancing means chasing people for tiny sums and filling out more paperwork than for a Schengen visa. So why then, would anyone want to freelance? For me, it's about the variety. I like that I can write on health one day and detective fiction the next. I like that I have interviewed Vikram Seth and Norman Mailer, but also street children and Yakshagana artists.

One of the experiences I am proudest of is a interview I did with the reclusive author Lionel Shriver for Elle. There's probably no other journalist in India who has read every one of Lionel's 12 or more books, but I had. And when I did meet Lionel, her icy exterior quickly melted when she realised I knew

she hated to talk about 'Kevin'. Later Lionel wrote me an email "wishing me joy", which I still treasure. I'd never have the time to do that kind of thorough job on staff.

Show me the money, you say? I am not going to pretend that freelancing is well paid or steady. With rates in India hovering at Rs 5 per word, often paid months later, I'd be stupid to try. BUT it can be better paid than you think. The smartest freelancers don't rely on writing for low-paying Indian magazines for their income. I focus on foreign publications, but not just the well-known ones. My best paying assignment was a US\$1.50 per word assignment for an obscure Texan trade magazine, which covered conferences. I also do media training and writing workshops.

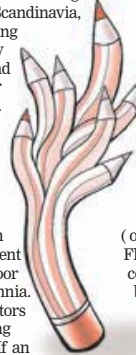
Also, here's a little secret. Editors pay writers who negotiate more. Most Indian writers think talking about money is dirty, but when you have been in this business as long as I have, you learn to get past your Indian upbringing. Hagglng like a fishwife helped me coax a British tabloid, that wanted a brief story on the 26/11 attacks, to go from £150 to £1000.

Despite the peaks and troughs, I so enjoy the freelance life that I wrote a book about it earlier this year, called "Everything You Wanted to Know About Freelance Journalism" (out from Westland, and available on Flipkart and Amazon.in), along with my co-author Charukesi Ramadurai. The book has sold over half of its print run in three months; clearly a lot of people think freelancing isn't second best any more. As for those who think "real" journalism is done by staff-

ers, I can't claim to have changed the world. I love writing about books, culture, people- things not greatly admired in a country where the only "serious" journalism is about politics and business. But this year, some of the really important stories in India- about Badaun, caste, health, the police force- have been written by my fellow freelancers.

Editors are finally waking up to the fact that freelancers can be just as good, or better, than staffers. And hey, with all those editors being fired these days, perhaps learning how to freelance is a good skill to fall back on.

Kavitha Rao is the co-author of "Everything You Wanted to Know About Freelance Journalism". Her work is at www.kavitharao.net



Everything You Wanted to Know About Freelance Journalism
Kavitha Rao, Charukesi Ramadurai;
Westland
₹250 PP 245



FILMS, TELEVISION: Outstanding ★★★★★ Very Good★★★★ Good★★★ Average★★ Poor ★

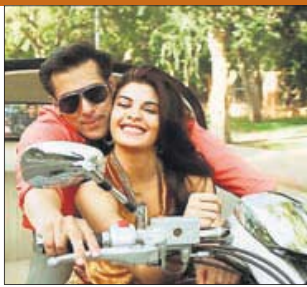
ALL CHARISMA, ZERO CRAFT

Kick Direction: Sajid Nadiadwala
Actors: Salman Khan, Jacqueline Fernandez, Randeep Hooda, Nawazuddin Siddiqui
Rating: ★★☆☆☆



The first thing you should know about *Kick* is that it is an outrageously silly film. It lurches from a thwarted love story to infantile comedy to slick action to shamelessly manipulative melodrama without any attempt at coherence or consistency. *Kick* is the official remake of a 2009 Telugu blockbuster also called *Kick*, but debutant director Sajid Nadiadwala bungs in Hollywood-inspired action, smatches of *Dhoom 3* and even a smattering of *Jab Tak Hai Jaan*. Salman Khan plays Devi Lal Singh, an adrenalin junkie who has quit 32 jobs in search of a kick (incidentally, every character in this film says Kick at least a dozen times, just in case you forgot which film you were watching). He falls in love with a psychiatrist named Shaina, played by Jacqueline Fernandez. With great affection, he calls her Dr Psycho. Meanwhile she gets

to say lines like: "Social psychology ke hisab se aadmi ki pehchaan uske kaam se hoti hai." Jacqueline is like a pretty wax doll and even the film doesn't take Shaina seriously. Anyway, Shaina can't put up with Devi's hunger for excitement, so they break up. And he somehow evolves into Devil, a Robin Hood-type masked robber who steals from the rich to give to the poor. Enter super cop Himanshu Tyagi, played by Randeep Hooda, who becomes both Shaina's fiancée and Devil's nemesis. Cops in Hindi movies are usually bumbling idiots but Himanshu is a whole new level of incompetent. Are you following this story? It doesn't matter: Because a Salman Khan film isn't about the plot. It's about Salman, who once again plays his signature persona—a charming, playful, slightly crooked superhero with a heart of gold. What's fun is that Salman is in on the joke. He's aware that he's on the screen not to deliver a performance but to give us a good time. But even if you're willing to ignore the logic-free story and buy heavily into the cult of Bhai, *Kick* is bumpy, and far too convoluted to deliver the joyride of a *Dabangg*. What does work are the thrilling action sequences; Rajat Arora's crackling dialogue; and, above all, Nawazuddin Siddiqui as the wicked Shiv Gajra.



■ Jacqueline (Shaina) is like a pretty wax doll and even the film doesn't take Shaina seriously. She plays a psychiatrist in the film



WATCH

TRIP TO BOUNTIFUL



The Grand Budapest Hotel
Direction: Wes Anderson
Actors: Ralph Fiennes, Tony Revolori
Rating: ★★★★★

Inspired by the melodramas of Austrian-Jewish novelist Stefan Zweig, *The Grand Budapest Hotel* features many of the visual motifs familiar from the previous films (*The Royal Tenenbaums*, *Moonrise Kingdom*) of hipster auteur Wes Anderson: colourfully adorned sets, striking compositions and, of course, elegant tracking shots. One such shot follows a young woman to a cemetery during the opening sequence. She reverently hangs a hotel room key on a headstone labeled 'Author' before proceeding to read from the unnamed writer's memoir. A seamless transition transports us from the present-day back to 1985 to meet the ageing author (Tom Wilkinson) and in a further flashback to 1968 when as a young man (now



played by Jude Law) he is told the fascinating history of the titular hotel. A comic caper tinged with melancholy, Anderson's eighth feature is mostly set in a fictional East European republic during the early 1930s. The spectre of fascism as well as of communist privation looms over the continent. Utilizing an intricate story-within-a-story structure, the script recounts the misadventures of the hotel's concierge (Fiennes) and his devoted protégé/lobby boy (Revolori). In the leads, both Ralph Fiennes and newcomer Tony Revolori deliver sparkling comedic turns.