

'I KEPT TELLING MY DIRECTOR THAT URI IS NOT A FILM ABOUT HEROES, BUT SUPERHEROES'

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

I was excited about finding out how the operation was carried out and how the team was formed. Also, the politics around it intrigued me. As an actor, I wanted to explore the action genre. The action in this film is realistic and that appealed to me. As an audience, be it Indian or international films, I get kicked about movies based on the military forces. Through the process of this film, I understood the life of our men in uniform, and a subject like this brings a change within you. Our problems seem immaterial when you look at their lives and what they do on a daily basis. We were shooting in the cantonment area in Patiala. The regiment was called Haathi Regiment and they hosted us for dinner. The party went on till about 4 in the morning. The following day was our day-off and I was planning to sleep. There was this 26-year-old Captain with us and when I asked him about his schedule for the next day, he said that they had to be on the grounds at 5 am for a 25-km run. I almost felt apologetic about hanging out with them for so long. The Captain also said that they live every day to the fullest, because the next day their photos could be in the papers. I was stumped and I couldn't sleep after that. They have reached a state of mind where they don't care about death. They are doing this for us. I feel honoured that I got a chance to pay a tribute to their valour and sacrifice. Also, playing a Special Forces commando is a different ballgame. They call themselves a breed apart, which they truly are. I kept telling my director that this is not a film heroes, but about superheroes.

THE MOST BEAUTIFUL THING TO HAVE HAPPENED AS A RESULT OF THE #METOO MOVEMENT IS THAT MEN HAVE STARTED MONITORING THEIR BEHAVIOUR. IT IS HIGH TIME THAT MEN REALISED THAT THEY CAN'T TAKE ANYONE FOR GRANTED. IT'S NOT EASY FOR PEOPLE TO REVEAL THEIR IDENTITY AND NAME PEOPLE. IT WAS MESSY, BUT IT WAS NEEDED. THERE WILL BE COLLATERAL DAMAGE, BUT THE FOUNDATION HAS BEEN SHAKEN

When it came to portraying Major Vhaan Shergill, did you rely on the script and the director's vision, or did you dig out all that was available about the surgical strike to construct the character? How much of what is shown in the film is based on what happened in reality and how much of it has been fictionalised? After meeting top bureaucrats and defence personnel, my director had his research in place. There are certain aspects which can't be revealed in the public domain because of security protocol, especially when it comes to a mission like the surgical strike. Firstly, when a surgical strike is carried out, the identity of the army men who are involved in it cannot be revealed. The names of the commandos in the film are fictional. Secondly, some details involving the mission, which fall under the purview of intelligence detail, also can't be given out and therefore, those portions are fictionalised. That will be confidential no matter what happens and that was not shared with us. But at the same time, while fictionalising it, we couldn't

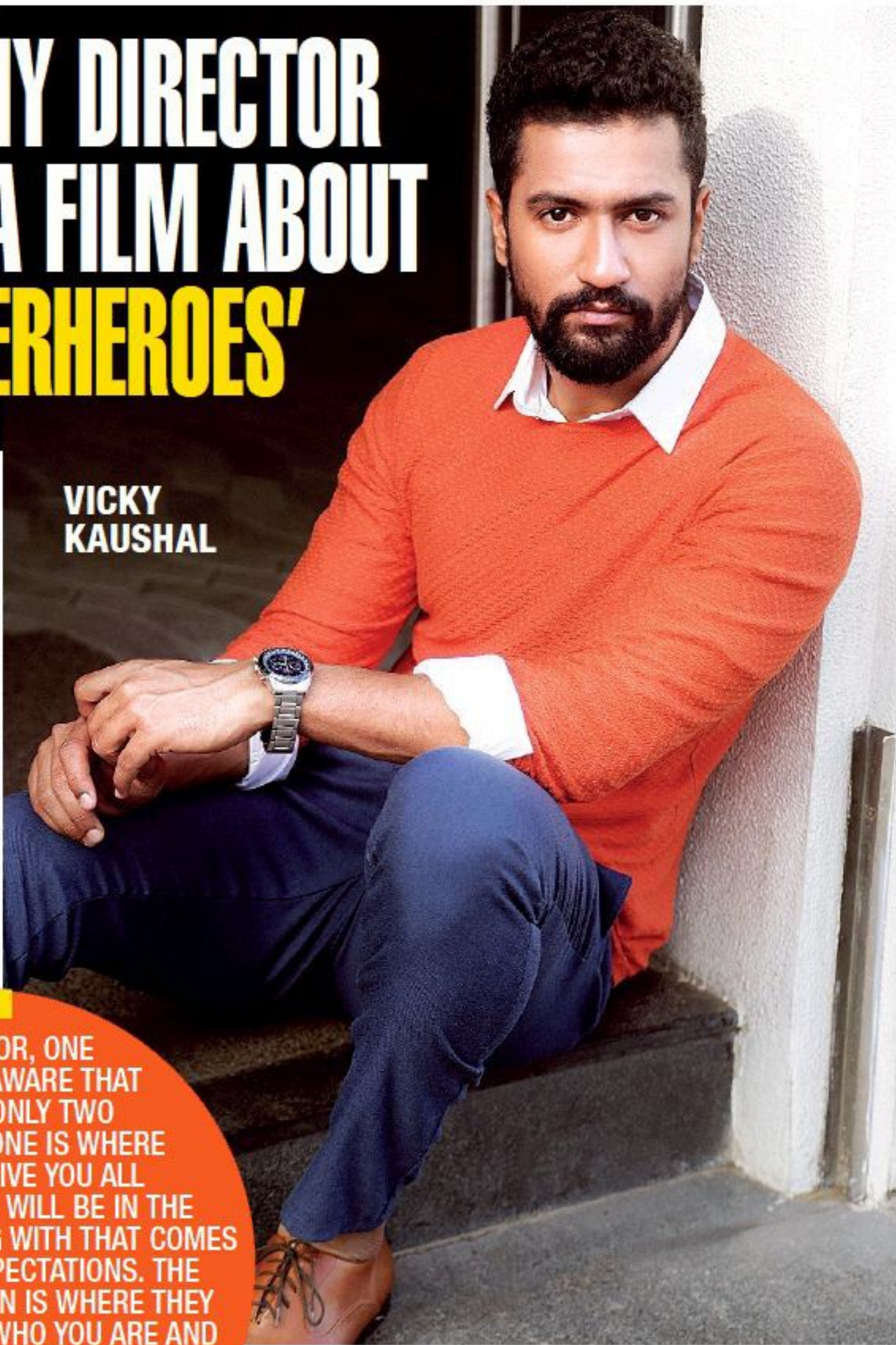
take many liberties. Apart from this, everything else is exactly the way it happened. Several media reports suggested that the surgical strike was politicised for gaining mileage by political parties. What are your views on the subject? I am not a politically aware person because I find it complicated. Also, I feel my understanding of politics is at a surface level. I do hear people discussing it. I don't understand the language that is spoken on news channels or at rallies. Terrorism is something that should be condemned. One feels sad

AS AN ACTOR, ONE NEEDS TO BE AWARE THAT THERE ARE ONLY TWO DESTINATIONS. ONE IS WHERE PEOPLE WILL GIVE YOU ALL THE LOVE AND YOU WILL BE IN THE LIMELIGHT, BUT ALONG WITH THAT COMES PRESSURE AND EXPECTATIONS. THE SECOND DESTINATION IS WHERE THEY DON'T CARE ABOUT WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT AFFECTED BY YOU. ONE HAS TO BE AWARE OF WHICH DESTINATION THEY ARE AIMING FOR

that there is so much hatred towards another human being. Terrorists in the past have taken over cities. Earlier, one would say that terrorists operate only in the border areas. Today, it is happening in military camps and it's happening 5 km away from my house as well. I could have been around the Gateway Of India with my family when the 26/11 attacks happened. Our army and government shoulder a huge responsibility. They have to take some hard decisions on behalf of the entire nation. What I understand is that a call like the surgical strike was long pending, because it wasn't a strike on Pakistani civilians or the Pakistani government. The strike was targeted at the militants who were responsible for the Uri attacks and who might have carried out further attacks. As far the views of various political parties, I don't understand it. I believe in the army and their spirit. Retaliation like this also gives a boost to them and sends out a message that they are not sitting ducks. My conclusions are based on what I have understood of this, I could be wrong about it.

2018 has been a turning point for your career. Raazi, Sanju and Manmarziyaan gave you the opportunity to showcase your range as an actor. Do you agree? Yes, given my short filmography so far, 2018 was the year when things changed for me. I was part of films that enabled me to reach a larger audience. The films were massy, which led to people recognising me. In 2017, I was shooting for these films and I was only hopping from one set to the other. I was keen on finding out how 2018 would pan out, given that I had many releases. I was also wondering how my performances would be received. It was something that I wanted validation for and I got it. The feedback I got for my work made me believe that I was going in the right direction. It motivated me to push boundaries in terms of the roles that I can take on. Today, actors like Ranveer Singh, Ranbir Kapoor, Varun Dhawan, Ayushmann Khurrana and Rajkumar Rao are able to co-exist and they all bring different things to the table. You started out with content-driven films like Masaan and

VICKY KAUSHAL



Raman Raghav 2.0 and eventually, made your way towards more commercial films. Are trying to avoid being straightjacketed in categories? For me, there are only two categories. Either it's a good film or a bad film. It could be a niche film or a commercial film, the story needs to connect with me. Whether a film is made with ₹100 or a hundred crore is immaterial. If the role scares me in a good way, I want to play it. I don't look at films from a surgeon's point of view. There are no calculations. The audience has evolved in such a way that there is no formula that can be applied to make films. What has also happened is



that the audience doesn't compare you with other actors. They compare you with your earlier work. I realised this after reading comments about my work by people on social media. As an actor, one needs to be aware that there are only two destinations. One is where people will give you all the love and you will be in the limelight, but along with that comes pressure and expectations. The second destination is where they don't care about who you are and what you do because they are not affected by you. One has to be aware of which destination they are aiming for. I am willing to embrace the pressure and the expectations which come with being in the limelight, as a result of being an actor. Everybody has realised that the hero of the film is the script. Today, you can work with non-actors, but if your

script is good, the audience will flock to the theatres. The #MeToo movement exposed many skeletons in the cupboard. What did you make of it and how do you think this movement will affect change in the future? It's a historic and revolutionary movement. The most beautiful thing to have happened as a result is that men have started thinking twice, as to what their behaviour could lead to. They have started monitoring their behaviour and that's a great thing to have happened. It's high time men realised that they can't take anyone for granted. It's not easy for people to reveal their identity and name people. It was messy, but it was needed. There will be collateral damage, but the foundation has been shaken. This movement will help in creating a safe and equal work environment.

Here's a new venture that harbours big dreams



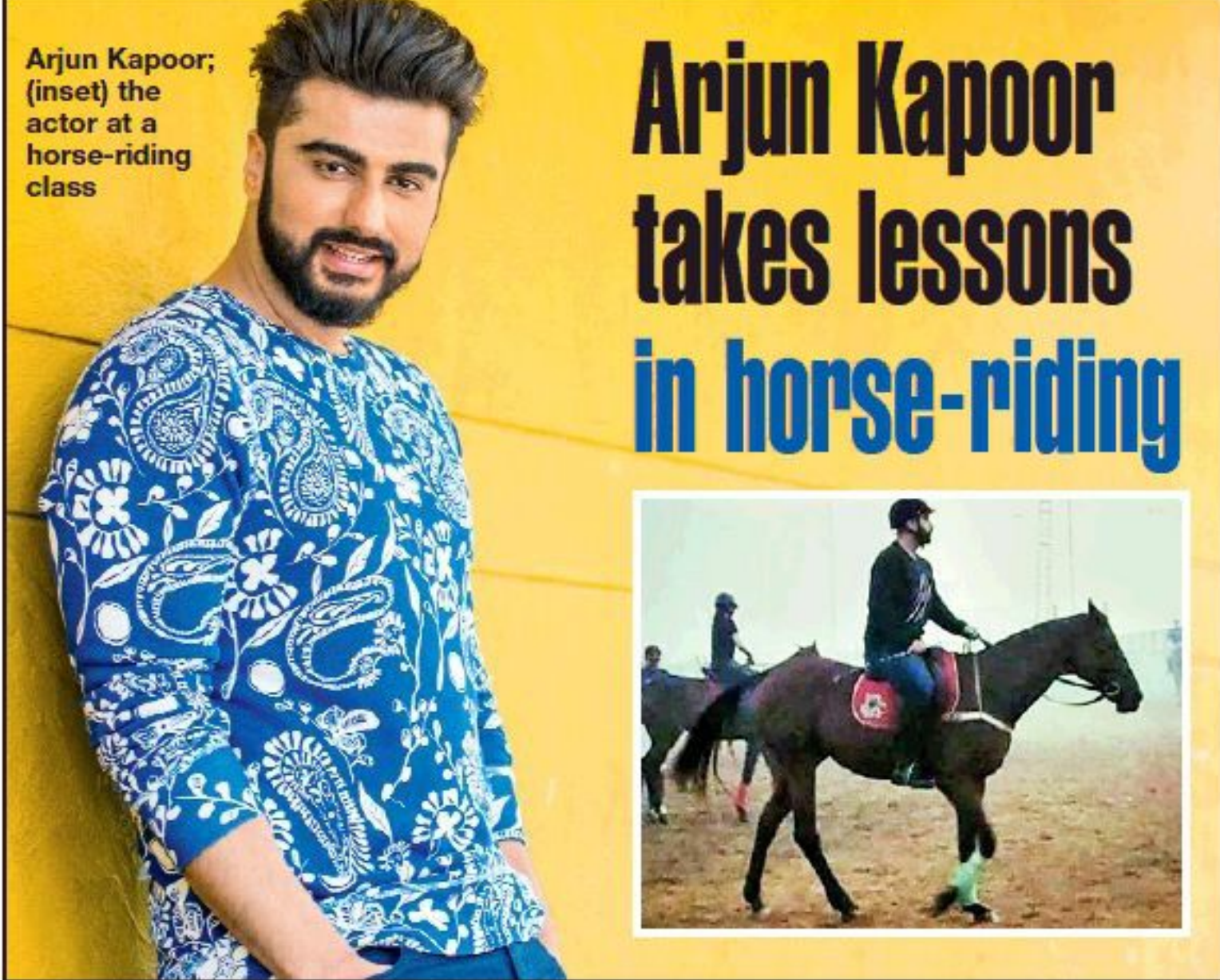
Varun Bagla



Mansi Bagla

An acknowledged name in the realty sector, Mini Homes plans to replicate its growth strategy in the field of cinema with Mini Films, an extension of the company. It's promoted by Mansi (company director) and Varun Bagla (co-founder and CEO). For Mansi, Mini doesn't just represent short films. It's also a moniker of her name. The businesswoman regards several cinema stalwarts as her source of inspiration. "I worship cinema and my company and I consider filmmaking as a craft, which is serious business," says Mansi. Her production company is in talks with several prominent

film personalities for quite a few projects. "We want to promote debutants. Also, the musical era of cinema should return," she says, adding that she looks forward to working with Shah Rukh Khan some day. Talking about Mansi's inclination towards filmmaking, Varun says, "She has the ability, and is blessed with strong sixth sense which always helps her in making the right decisions." Mini Films is poised to make a leap in the Hindi film industry. Mansi sums up, "One should be knowledgeable to be in this business today. I am here to stay and dedicate my life to cinema."




Arjun Kapoor; (inset) the actor at a horse-riding class

Arjun Kapoor takes lessons in horse-riding

Arjun Kapoor is taking horse riding lessons to prep for his upcoming period drama Panipat. The actor believes that the process has been therapeutic and empowering for him. He took to his page on a photo-sharing website and posted a picture of himself on a horse at Mahalaxmi Racecourse, Mumbai. He captioned it, "New year, new learnings... so the last whole month of 2018 went in enjoying the company of an animal, mother

nature and sunrises... As I gear up to restart the shooting for Panipat, I feel privileged to be able to learn this beautiful art of becoming one with this most glorious animal." He also wrote, "Can't wait to get back on set with this new childlike excitement for what is my toughest and biggest film yet." For those who've tuned in late, Panipat, directed by Ashutosh Gowariker, is a period drama revolving around a historic war, and also stars Kriti Sanon.




Mark the exclusive with the best.

Mercedes-Benz C-Class. Never stop improving.

Don't miss out on exclusive benefits by visiting your nearest Auto Hangar showroom and beginning the year with a bang.

50:50 - Pay 50% now and 50% after 24 months*



autohangar
Dealer for Mercedes-Benz Passenger Cars

Sales Hotline no.: 9167015000, Trade-in no.: 9223547099 | Prabhadevi • Hughes Road (South Mumbai) • Andheri (W)
Website: www.autohangar.in • Showroom Timings: 9:30am to 7:00pm

*Terms and Conditions apply. Accessories, colours and fitments shown may not be part of standard specification. Mercedes-Benz cars: The C-Class meets Bharat Stage IV emission norms.