



Febronia Effie Pajat loves to go to places where others fear to tread and does so in four wheels, four-by-four to be specific. The 5th Semester BTTM student of MLCU is an off-road aficionado and was the only female participant in the recent AHOR off-roading event. Find out more about her passion in cars and motorsports in the interview that our correspondent had with her.

Q: Can you please tell us about your passion and hobbies?

Febronia: Basically, I love cars a lot. However, there are different types of cars and I'm not very into fast cars or rally cars but I'm more into off-road vehicles. My main hobby is off-roading where we go off the normal course. As my uncle used to say, "Our roads start where yours end." I also love to do research and find out new things about cars. I also love to tinker with and fix cars myself.

Q. Where did it all start? How did this love and passion for cars develop?

Febronia: Since I have a brother who also loves cars, this passion developed during my childhood. I used to be intrigued by whatever he did and would try to follow him. He used to buy car magazines and I would read them. I also have an uncle who is the President of AHOR. When we were kids he used to take us to these off-road events and that was when I started observing and learning. That was where my passion started.



Q. What was your first car?



Febronia: The first car I drove and learnt driving in was a Maruti Zen.

Q. Can you tell us a little bit about your participation in motorsports?

Febronia: Actually, the AHOR event recently was the first competition I ever participated in. But I do go to a lot of events and I saw how they would go about in those competitive events and that was how I got the courage to go ahead and participate.

Q. How did you prepare yourself for the competition?

Febronia: I had to do a lot of mental preparation because we needed to be very sharp in the course. While driving, we had to be very mindful of potholes, rocks and we needed to be mentally prepared for tackling all those. We also had to be careful with our speed and traction while driving through the course.

Q. What vehicle did you use and how did you prepare it for competing?

Febronia: I used my Jeep which is actually a modified Marshall. I had to do a lot of modifications on it. I had to change the tyres and shockers. I even had to learn about the usage of the different differential modes and the gears for off-road usage.



Q. Being your first competition and you being the only female participant, how did you feel when you eventually won?

Febronia: I was very disappointed with the fact that I was the only female participant because I did not have anyone to compete with. But in the end it was all about the experience. Being the only one, I had the advantage and I was able to take my time during

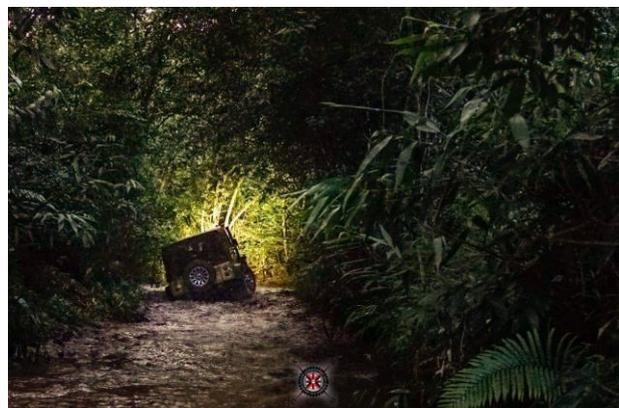
the course. I did not have to rush and there was no pressure as such while going through the course.

Q. What are the challenges that you encountered in the process of preparing and competing in the event and how did you overcome them?

Febronia: There were a lot of difficulties while preparing the car and because of this I learnt a lot of new things. Even while going to the competition, I got stuck because the self start of the car did not work. For three days continuously I had to push my car to get it to start. So, even that was a learning experience for me.

Q. You said that you have been to many competitions. From what you see there, where is motorsports right now in the North East?

Febronia: Motorsports is growing a lot in North East because a couple of years back, there were very few participants. But the number has grown over the years. I can also see a lot of women who are interested in participating in these kind of events. Even on that day, many girls came up to me and said that it all looks fun and they are encouraged to participate in the following year. So looking at this trend, I can say for certain that motorsports is growing and will be growing more in the years to come.



Q. A lot of people who participate in motorsports often complain that money is the main problem because the cost of participating and repairing the vehicle after the event is very high. What is your take on that?

Febronia: In my case, I have a group of friends who would build and fix their own cars. In this group, we pool our resources and expertise. So instead of taking the car to a shop which costs a lot and where I cannot see what they do, I would rather open it up myself and do my own repair work. This also helps in bringing down the cost substantially.

Q. Can you tell us about the participation of women in these kind of events?

Febronia: There are various kinds of motorsport events, I have seen a few female participants in rally events, but rally is very different from off-roading. In rally it is just driving on dirt roads. It does not really demand the mental preparation or the preparation for the car that off-roading does. Rally is also inclined more towards speed and driving fast. But in the area of off-roading, so far, I have not seen a female participant.

Q. What is your message to other girls and women who are interested in this?

Febronia: My message to them would be, Do not be afraid of anything. Take every hurdle and obstacle as a challenge and in overcoming that challenge the satisfaction as well as the rush and the adrenaline that you get from it will be truly rewarding. I would really love it if those who are interested would let go of their inhibitions and give it a try.

Q. What are the items in your bucket list right now?

Febronia: Right now the foremost thing in my bucket list is to open up my own garage. When I am done with my studies, I would love to focus on building my own car from scratch.

