

# The real deal

The Pajero shows off its true skills

Words: Joseph Koraith

**T**he Mitsubishi Pajero has always had a soft corner in my heart. It was the first SUV that made me go weak in my knees. Maybe it was the air scoops on the hood or that 'Intercooler' boldly printed on the side that caught my fancy. Now Mitsubishi-Hindustan Motors has come up with something called the Pajero Heart in Mouth Rally, where it gets its Pajero and Montero customers to experience the SUV's impressive off-roading abilities. The Pajero has after all won the Dakar rally an incredible 13 times. And they invited OVERDRIVE to experience it. Guess who got the chance to fulfill a boyhood fantasy.

This was the second leg of the rally, being held in Delhi. Over 40 Pajero and about a dozen Montero customers had turned up to push their vehicles to the limit. A pony-tailed old gentleman, a bunch of *ghabroo* jawaans, the quintessential sardarjis and quite a few 'cool' husbands with their nervous wives and excited kids in tow made up the numbers.

I was bunched in with those *ghabroo* jawaans in a Montero. Just my luck. The 42-km off-roading section had six sections. And we nearly got stuck in the first itself. The Montero 3.2AT being an automatic didn't have the liberty of shifting into a lower gear for more traction. We came across a slush-filled path and we needed about five attempts in low ratio to finally clear that stretch. The Pajeros coming behind us however cleared it at one go. The next section saw us go almost tyre-deep in water and rocky terrain but the Monteros and the Pajeros swam through effortlessly. But it was the third stage which truly was a 'heart in mouth' scenario. The vehicles had to go up a 40 degree incline for

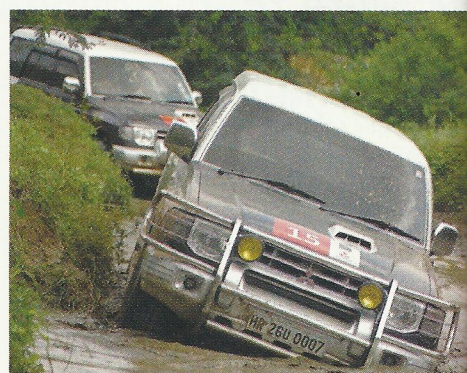
about three Pajero lengths and then come down the other side. The best our Montero could manage was to get within about ten feet of the 'summit'. This Rupees 50 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi) SUV wasn't good enough. But the Pajero put up a fight. Many came close but only three gritty ones managed to clear it. The pony tailed gentleman was the first to do so. One of the villagers who had gathered to witness these city retards abusing their extremely expensive vehicles actually gave him ten rupees for the effort.

All in all a very adrenaline pumping event and the only complaint was that I didn't get to drive a Pajero. Even though many didn't complete the sections, everyone had a smile on their faces. They knew what the Pajero could really do and could now boast to others. Mitsubishi plans to organize similar rallies in Vadodara, Pune, Coimbatore and Bengaluru in the coming months.

So if you have a Pajero lying around then head to these venues. **OD**



The approximately 40 degree incline which defeated everyone except for three gritty Pajeros



The Pajero wading through water as if it was born to do this, wait, it is. The Montero got stuck in slush and it took five attempts in 4x4 low for us to get out