

## Mahindra to make boats

*Forms jt venture with Mumbai-based Ocean Blue.*

*The company aims at selling boats to institutions, leisure resorts, corporates and young retail customers.*

### Our Bureau

Mumbai, Feb 17 Mahindra & Mahindra, the tractor-to-software group, has entered boat manufacturing with an eye on tapping business potential of marine-based leisure activities.

Mahindra Oceanblue, the 51:49 joint venture with Mumbai-based marina developers Ocean Blue, will make fibreglass power-boats in the range of 20 feet to 40 feet.

The products will be branded Mahindra Odyssea. "We will launch a prototype of our boat three days from now at the Mumbai International Boat Show," said Mr Zhooben Bhiwandiwalla, Executive Director, Mahindra & Mahindra, who is the director of the new initiative.

The boats will have engines in the range of 75 HP to 200 HP, which will be sourced from international companies, mainly from the US-based Evinrude.

Mr Bhiwandiwalla said the boats will be initially manufactured in the existing infrastructure of the Mahindra group companies in Maharashtra and Goa. The company has plans to expand to cabin cruisers and catamarans.

The company expects to sell 300-400 boats annually from the third year. He said the company would eventually set up a boat manufacture facility. The company aims at selling boats to institutions, leisure resorts, corporates and young retail customers.

About marketing, Mr Bhiwandiwalla said, "We are not going to launch any showroom now. Currently our model will be direct selling."

He declined to reveal the investment into the boat manufacturing venture.

"They are fairly simple products. They don't require huge investment. We would leverage synergies of group companies such as Mahindra Composites, Mahindra Defence Systems and Mahindra Financial Service Ltd," he said.

"This is first time that a major Indian industrial group is entering into the leisure boating industry which has till recently been characterised by a small number of independent agencies offering imported versions from international manufacturers. We see a huge potential," he said.

"Mahindra Odyssea marks the advent of a new journey for Mahindra which now has a presence in almost every segment of the transport ecosystem. Our country's vast coastline and water bodies represent significant untapped potential for both water transport and marine based leisure activities," said Mr Anand Mahindra, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, Mahindra Group, in a statement.