

# **Sania Mirza signed as Brand Ambassador of Delhi franchise in Indian Badminton League**

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**New Delhi:** Business conglomerate Krrish Group on Friday named Indian tennis star Sania Mirza as the brand ambassador of its Delhi franchise in the upcoming Indian Badminton League (IBL).

Krrish Group, which deals in distillery, breweries, construction and real estate, will make its debut in sports arena with the IBL and has named its franchise "Delhi Smashers".



"It's an amazing concept and I wish the Delhi franchise all luck in the IBL. I hope to attend a few games and try to find some time from my busy schedule. It's great to be announced the brand ambassador of the franchise," Mirza told reporters here.

"Badminton is different to my racquet sport. I haven't played badminton for a long...may be after 20 years I think. The whole concept is amazing. With the IPL doing so well and with the tennis, we are also starting ITPL which Mahesh (Bhupathi) is doing. Right now, badminton does have a certain star power and I think there's no reason for it not to work," she added.

Sania tried her hand at badminton on the sidelines of the function and played a short-duration friendly match with a local female player.

Mirza said badminton holds a lot of promise in India with the likes of Saina Nehwal and Ashwini Ponnappa performing well at the international level.

"I would like to say I am honoured to play for India for so long. Shuttlers like Saina, Jwala Gutta and Ashwini Ponnappa are playing so well for India which augurs well for the sport. It's great for badminton and it's great for sportswomen in the country," she said.

"I am here today as a sportsperson, not badminton not my sport, its a sport which needs a lot of attention, encouragement and a lot of push to become a very big sport in the country. With people like Saina Nehwal, we are able to set the standards high in badminton. We can say that we are world beaters in badminton," she added.

The Gurgaon-based business group has appointed former World No 1 Rashid Sidek as the chief coach of the side. The Malaysian had won the Thomas Cup and an Olympic bronze medal. The USD one-million IBL is set to launch on August 14, 2013, with a clash between Hyderabad Hotshots and Banga Beats.

The 2013 IBL will feature six franchises and will run for 18 days. Each franchise will host a two-day leg and the League will showcase a grand total of 90 matches.

The top four franchises in the League will clash in the semifinals and the winners will meet in the grand finale on August 31, which will be played in Mumbai.

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