

Khanna persuades Paes and Bhupathi to play in Olympics

All India Tennis Association (AITA) secretary-general Anil Khanna has brokered peace between Mahesh Bhupathi and Leander Paes and persuaded them to team up for the Beijing Olympics.

Khanna, who met the two warring partners during the French Open in Paris Monday, said the meeting was 'extremely cordial.'

'I am very pleased that Leander and Mahesh have also agreed to my request to play together a couple of tournaments and also train for one week in preparation for the Olympics. The meeting was extremely cordial and both the players had only one interest and that was to do their best in Olympics,' Khanna said in a statement released by AITA here Tuesday.

Estranged Paes and Bhupathi have now decided to keep aside their differences and play in the doubles event at Beijing to brighten India's medal hopes in the Olympics in August.

'The both are great nationalists and I am quite confident that they would win a medal for India at the Beijing Olympics.'

'Lee and Hesh will pair up for two ATP Tour events before the Olympics. The first will be on grass in the week before Wimbledon at Shertongenbosch in Holland and the second in Indianapolis, Cincinnati, in the second week after Wimbledon,' Khanna's statement said.

Khanna also said the pair would get together for a few days training programme before the Olympics with Paes' coach Rick Leach and Bhupathi's coach Scott Davidoff and a trainer.

Both players will reach Beijing for the opening ceremony and will have a training session there for a few days before the competition begins.

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