

## Great Khali refreshes India connection

He is 7 feet 3 inches tall and weighs 190 kg. Clad in a white summer shirt straining at the 63-inch chest, the Great Khali, an Indian professional wrestler who is the current rage on the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) television shows, lives up to his name.

He is the current world number one after clinching the World Heavyweight Champion's title at the Great American Bash, a live wrestling series on television, in 2007.

Seated at the head of a conference table at the Oberoi Hotel in the capital, he looks like Goliath. Matted locks fall like a curtain round his massive shoulder and his square jaws flare at the chin to give him the look of a giant.

But the man, who twice put on the mat The Undertaker, one of the most vicious fighters on the WWE team, lights up when someone mentions his childhood. And he has a message for the kids.

'Tell your children at home not to try to wrestle like the way I do on screen. They should not emulate me because it might harm them. Wrestling is a tough sport,' the wrestler told IANS at a media interface Wednesday.

The Great Khali, born Dalip Singh Rana in Dhirana village in Himachal Pradesh, is in India for three weeks. He has a busy schedule promoting Ten Sports, with which he has tied up, and meeting people and the media.

The US-based wrestler is the brain behind bringing the most barbaric wrestling match in WWE to the Great American Bash - The Punjabi Prison Match, where he defeated The Undertaker.

Khali has fought several big names in the ring like Funaki of SmackDown (a wrestling show), world champion Rey Mysterio, Tommy Dreamer, John Cena and Shawn Michaels.

'Wrestling and body building are good career choices today for the Indian youth, provided they learn from professionals and follow a strict discipline,' he said.

He felt the Indian government was not doing enough to promote the sport.

'I personally cannot do much to promote wrestling in India despite the fact it is a traditional sport. I am hardly left with time for anything else after my professional commitments. At the most, I can call a couple of kids over to the US and train them,' he said.

But youngsters, said Khali, were not serious about physically demanding sports these days. 'They mostly want to work and do not want to wrestle because the training process is time-taking. I had to spend a lot of time on the sport.'

Khali, who liked jousting since childhood, was spotted at the age of 15 by a senior Punjab police official and joined the force as a constable at Jalandhar under a sports quota. Khali, a former Mr.India (1995 and 1996), moved to the US in 2000 with the help of his family, friends and the Punjab Police. He has no plans of leaving his job in the force despite the fact that he lives in the US.

Khali was a body-builder and accomplished boxer before he took to professional wrestling. He made his first appearance in the American ring under the name Giant Singh at the All Pro Wrestling (APW) in October 2000 and made his WWE debut in 2006.

The WWE fighter is known for his finishing and signature moves known as the 'Khali bomb' and the 'Khali vice grip'.

'But my most memorable fight is the tie for the World Heavyweight Champion's crown in 2007, where I fought 20 giants for the top slot,' he said.

Khali has a simple fitness regimen. 'I eat four meals a day, may be a little more than normal folks. It's mostly vegetarian, and I work out for two hours,' the wrestler said. He avoids fat, sugar and oil.

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