

## 'The Great Khali' to fight Punjab police - outside the ring

This is one fight where former World Wide Entertainment (WWE) champion 'The Great Khali' has nearly lost round one without making any move -- but he is resolved to continue the battle and eventually hopes to emerge victorious.

Khali, whose real name is Dalip Singh Rana and is an assistant sub-inspector (ASI) in the Punjab police, has been suspended and a departmental inquiry has been launched against him for remaining 'absent' from duty without sanctioned leave, police officials said here Friday.

The WWE champion is presently posted with the 7th battalion of the Punjab Armed Police (PAP) based here, 150 km from Chandigarh.

'His medical leave ended in December 2008. Since then he has not reported for duty. He had sought more leave for five years which has been rejected. As he has remained absent from duty, we have suspended him and ordered a departmental probe against him,' battalion commandant Arun Pal Singh said.

But the WWE wrestler, who has beaten the likes of internationally known WWE names like 'The Undertaker' and others, says that he will fight out the action taken against him by his employer, Punjab police.

'Let us see what happens. I will fight this out (suspension and departmental inquiry). I am presently not bothered about it,' Khali said here.

Incidentally, Khali's suspension and launching of a departmental probe against his 'absence' was ordered by PAP authorities Thursday when he happened to be here for some functions where he was invited as an international celebrity.

Khali was seen here with former Punjab director general of police (DGP) M.S. Bhullar, the officer who picked up the well-built and tall Rana from Himachal Pradesh and got him a job with the Punjab police as a sportsman in 1993.

Khali, who has no dearth of fans, including top celebrities, had got a hero's welcome when he came to India last year. Even President Pratibha Devisingh Patil had last year described the 7-foot 3 inches tall, 420 pounds (190 kgs) monster champ as 'pride of the nation'.

This week, tens of thousands of people choked the famous Ridge in Himachal's capital Shimla when Khali went there for an event.

His profile on the WWE website says: 'This enormous monster has walked the jungles of India unafraid of pythons and wrestled white Bengal tigers.'

Wrestlers and fitness freaks in Jalandhar, where Rana used to train before he became 'The Great Khali' (taken from Hindu goddess of destruction Kali whose follower he is), take pride that Khali once trained here.

Last year, Punjab and neighbouring states were flooded with T-shirts and other accessories carrying

Khali's photographs.

His run-in with the Punjab police is not new. Khali has been doing WWE fights in the US while being on extended 'medical leave' from his Jalandhar posting.

The Punjab police, which had 'dismissed' him from service three years ago also, 'corrected' its folly later and reinstated him.

His salary as an ASI in Punjab police is Rs.14,000 per month (just over USD 300), a 'huge' amount for him once but surely peanuts compared to his present earnings.

Khali's journey from this village in a not so prosperous area of this hill state is a true rags to riches story.

Born in a poor family Aug 27, 1972, rana remained unlettered. Being one of the seven siblings in the family, he even had to work as a roadside labourer to earn some money. He later went to Shimla to become a security guard.

It was here that Rana was spotted by Bhullar. The police officer, who was instrumental in getting several players from Punjab police to don international colours in various sporting disciplines by giving them training at Jalandhar's Punjab Armed Police (PAP) complex, got Rana a job in the Punjab police in 1993.

After landing in Jalandhar with his brother, who too was offered a police job to bring a reluctant Rana from his home state, the wrestler in him took Rana to local gyms where he trained hard. Wrestling awards soon followed and not before long, Rana was in United States for specialised wrestling training.

It was here that his talent got him into the WWE circuit.

A millionaire now, Khali is married to US-born Harminder Kaur and settled in Atlanta city in United States.

*Jaideep Sarin ( © IANS / India eNews)*