

**The Great Khali: from village labourer to showbiz wrestler** Shimla - From working as a labourer in a tiny Himalayan village to the rings of a professional wrestling circuit that is watched by millions worldwide, Dalip Singh Rana aka Singh has come a long way. Singh now fights for the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) in the United States under the ring name 'The Great Khali'. Standing at 7 feet 3 inches and weighing 420 pounds, Singh is one of the tallest wrestlers in the popular WWE circuit. He has also acted in a Hollywood film 'The Longest Yard' with Adam Sandler. 'I spoke to him on phone in California, he is practising hard and looking forward to his upcoming fights before he returns home in about three months,' his uncle Sai Singh told IANS. On his debut on WWE's television show 'Smackdown!' last month, Singh attacked The Undertaker during his match with Mark Henry. In January, TEN Sports signed a one-year contract with him. Singh has been named The Great Khali by WWE organisers as he often invokes Kali, the Hindu goddess of destruction, during his fights. He is the third of eight children born to his parents in Dhirana village of Sirmaur valley, about 170 km from here. Before embarking on his sporting career, Singh was an officer in the Punjab state police, a champion bodybuilder and an athlete. Unfortunately, however, villagers in his home Dhirana can't watch his exploits in the ring because they have no access to cable television. 'Dalip is illiterate and worked for many years as a labourer in a small hamlet and later in Shimla, after which he was picked by the neighbouring Punjab Police chief and recruited as a constable,' said Sai Singh. Here he began body building and later went on to make his debut as a professional wrestler.

( © IANS / India eNews)