



■ Jalal Bin Thaneya leaves Al Ghuwaifat yesterday. He expects his trek through Abu Dhabi to take three days.

Jaye Lentin/Gulf News

Bin Thaneya makes his way through Abu Dhabi desert

30-year-old Emirati set off from Al Ghuwaifat at 3.45am followed by his three-man team

ABU DHABI

BY PAUL CROMPTON
Staff Reporter

Jalal Bin Thaneya, who has started the first day of his attempt to cross the UAE by foot in seven days, is making his way through Abu Dhabi's desert.

At 3.45am, the 30-year-old Emirati and his team set off from the dusty border town of Al Ghuwaifat, just a stone's throw from the Saudi border.

Followed by his three-man support team — two in a Nissan Patrol and the other in a Nissan Altima which delivers supplies — Bin Thaneya spent the first hours jogging through the desert darkness.

Around 50km and 12 hours

later, with the relentless sun beating down, his pace has slowed to a brisk walk.

"It's hot," said Bin Thaneya's friend, who is closely shadowing him in the Patrol. The five-door rented 4x4 serves as a bed, supply store, changing room and kitchen.

"The walking area is not good, at the road and on the side of the road there is construction and sand and rocks," the friend told *Gulf News*.

Combating dehydration

To combat the heat, Bin Thaneya has been drinking lots of water, and using supplements his team has brought along. His friend reports that he has a little pain in his legs.

The runner expects his trek through Abu Dhabi emirate to take three out of the seven days that he needs to take home a Guinness World Record. The journey is set to end on Fujairah's coastline.

If he succeeds, he will be officially awarded for completing the "fastest crossing of the United Arab Emirates on foot".

He is also doing the trip to raise awareness for special needs, and has picked up several sponsors along the way.

Yesterday, the Smart Dubai Government, the tech arm of a city-wide initiative by the emirate's government, said it was sponsoring Bin Thaneya's quest.

"Adding a new record for the UAE with the objective of supporting children with disabilities has strongly prompted us to sponsor this event," said Wesam Lootah, chief of the tech arm.



To follow Bin Thaneya's journey online, log on to:
www.gulfnews.com