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Cancer Survivors Conquer Penang Channel

BUTTERWORTH, March 29 (Bernama) -- There certainly is life after surviving breast cancer.

Sixteen women proved this when they took on the arduous task of paddling 4km from Bagan Ajam here, to Tanjung City Marina at the Penang Island, using a dragon boat.

In just 32 minutes, the women, from the Breast Cancer Welfare Association, performed the feat which was the highlight of the Penang Channel Challenge, which began at 10.10am.

Association president Ranjit Kaur said the team, known as the Pink Challengers, had participated in many dragon boat events in the country such as the Penang International Dragon Boat festival in Teluk Bahang last year.

"We want to spread the message that there is life after breast cancer, and that one is not alone in battling the illness...we are all in the same boat," she told reporters after the flag-off of the event at Bagan Ajam by Penang Port Commission chairman Tan Cheng Liang here.

She said the group, which was set up in 2005, was inspired by a team of breast cancer survivors from a foreign country, which took part in the 2005 dragon boat competition in Penang.

"This event is significant to us as we take on the waves of the sea and push through the resistance, thus, being symbolic to the breast cancer battle that each member of our team has experienced through diagnosis, treatment and recovery," she said.

Ranjit noted that early detection and timely treatment of breast cancer could save one's life.

However, the association's team members were not alone today, as they were accompanied by the Royal Australian Air Force which supported the event by sending a team of 16 paddlers to row alongside the cancer survivors.

Earlier, upon arrival at the island, the group observed a moment's silence as they strew flowers into the sea, in memory of those who had fought and lost their battle against breast cancer.

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