



Sense of achievement: The Pink Challengers team alighting from their boat at the Tanjung City Marina in Weld Quay after taking part in the event. Leading the way are (from left) Delaney, Ranjit Kaur and Wong.

Cancer survivors turn rowers

By **PRISCILLA DIELENBERG**
and **M. SIVANANTHA SHARMA**
north@thestar.com.my

GEORGE TOWN: Fifteen gutsy breast cancer survivors took only 32 minutes to paddle 3.8km across the Penang Channel in a dragon boat to promote breast cancer awareness.

They surpassed their own expectations as they estimated it might take them about 45 minutes to become the first dragon boat team of breast cancer survivors to take on the endeavour.

The rowers, aged 38 to 72, are members of Pink Challengers, a dragon boat team under the Breast Cancer Welfare Association.

Among them was association president Ranjit Kaur, who said they took on the challenge to prove to themselves and the public that they

could overcome tough times.

"This event is significant to us as we take on the waves and push through resistance, symbolic of the breast cancer battle that we and our friends have experienced through our diagnosis, treatment and recovery."

Team captain Wong Mee Yee said the sea was not as choppy as they had anticipated.

Team manager Barbara Delaney said they trained vigorously for about a year and a half after coming up with the idea in 2006.

The Penang Channel Challenge was organised by the association and supported by the Penang Tourism Committee.

Penang Port Commission chairman Tan Cheng Liang sent off the rowers at the Butterworth Outer Ring Road rest and recreation area in

Bagan Ajam on the mainland. They were accompanied by another dragon boat with rowers from the Royal Australian Air Force Team and the marine police.

Upon arrival at the Tanjung City Marina at Weld Quay on the island, they were greeted by supporters, including the Harley Davidson Owners Group (Malaysia Chapter) and received their certificates of achievement from state Tourism Development, Culture, Arts and Heritage Committee chairman Danny Law Heng Kiang.

All present observed a moment of silence during the flowers-on-water ceremony where the team and supporters threw pink flowers into the sea in memory of those who fought and lost the battle against breast cancer, and as a tribute to those who were still fighting.