



ST PHOTO: MUGILAN RAJASEGERAN

ON THE GO: Madam Quek Shok Hong warming up before the 1km walk along Boat Quay to the Asian Civilisations Museum. The 72-year-old grandmother of four was joined by over 2,500 grandparents and their families for the morning stroll, led by Mr Lim Boon Heng, 60.

Activities galore on Grandparents' Day

By TESSA WONG

FROM a stroll along the Singapore River to a mass qigong workout, grandparents celebrated their special day with many activities across the island yesterday.

Grandparents' Day kicked off with more than 2,500 grandparents and their families taking a morning stroll along Boat Quay, led by Minister in the Prime Minister's Office Lim Boon Heng, 60.

Mr Wilson Lee, 71, who was at the event with his daughter and two grandsons, said: "It's quite meaningful, a chance for all three generations of my family to bond."

The 1km walk, which was organised by the Council for Third Age, ended at the Asian Civilisations Museum, where a series of books commissioned by the National Library Board was also launched.

Called *Letters From Grandma And Grandpa*, the books in the four national languages contain heartfelt messages written by grandparents to their grandchildren.

Meanwhile, 3,000 people took part in a qigong exercise at Republic Polytechnic, led by Dr Teo Ho Pin, Mayor of North West District.

There were also launches of a new senior care facility and a wellness programme.

Minister for Community De-

velopment, Youth and Sports Vivian Balakrishnan officially opened the Tembusu Neighbourhood Link on a carpark rooftop in Eunos Crescent.

Over at the other end of the island, the first of the Wellness Programme series was launched at NTUC Eldercare's Silver Circle (Jurong Central) facility by Mr Lim. It aims to serve 1,000 old folk in the next two years.

The Wellness Programme will also be launched in senior citizens' facilities in Punggol South, MacPherson and three other sites soon.

All will offer health screenings and a variety of programmes, ranging from financial planning classes to even mahjong sessions.

Mr Lim, who is also deputy

chairman of the People's Association (PA), told reporters that negotiations were on with the police to allow mahjong sessions to be organised regularly by groups within the PA network.

The Common Gaming Houses Act bars playing such games of chance for money in public places, although one-off mahjong sessions at community centres and resident committee centres have been allowed in the past.

Mr Lim stressed that gambling will not be allowed in these mahjong sessions, and that the activity was meant to stimulate seniors' mental activity.

"If there are things they are naturally interested in, and if we can use them, why not? In our context, mahjong is one of those things," he said.