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# Down memory lane

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## Photos of arches bring back fond recollections for retiree



*Malaysiaku Gemilang*

By **DERRICK VINESH**

derrickvinesh@thestar.com.my

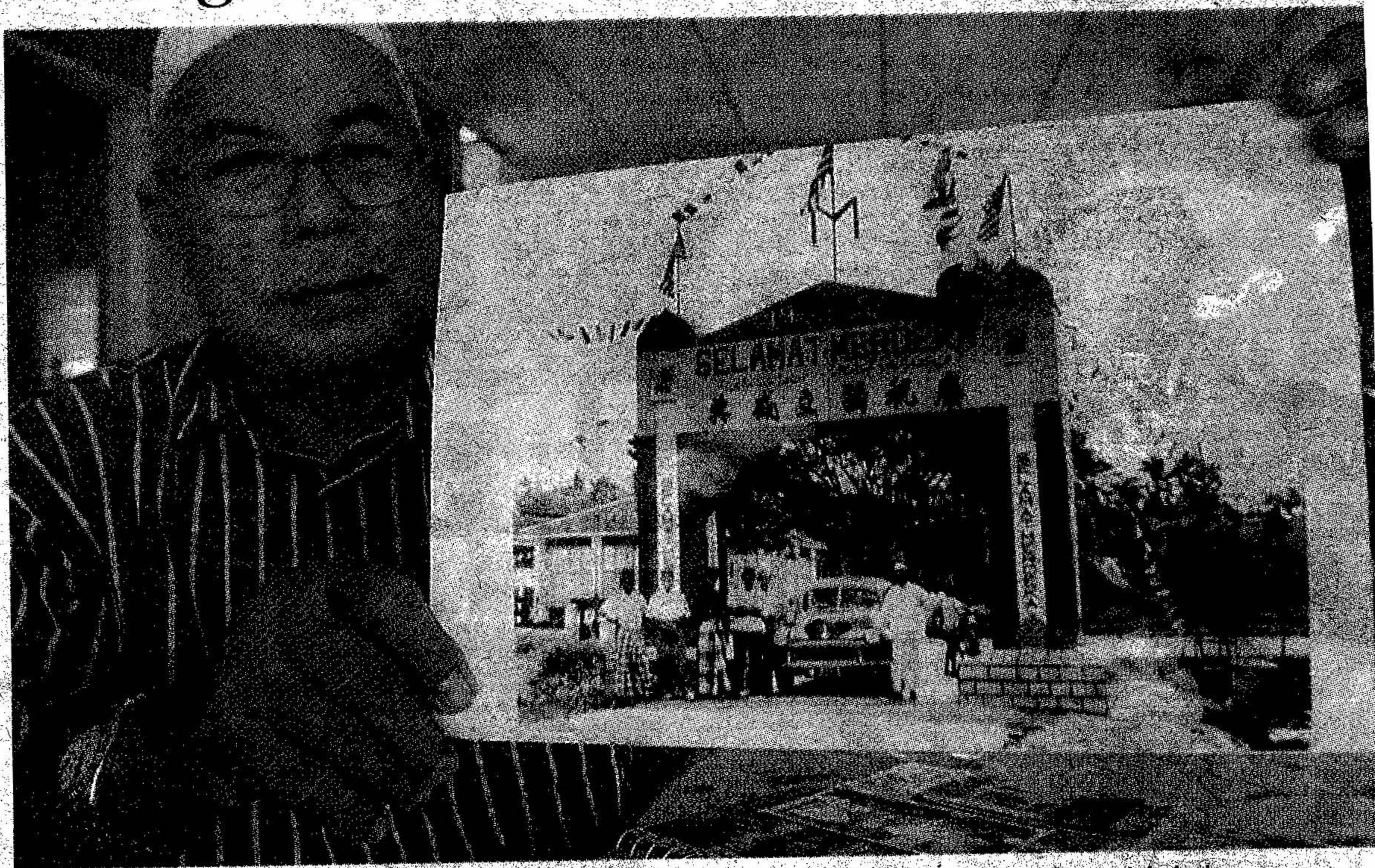
**NIBONG TEBAL:** Armed with a borrowed camera, Md Zain Mohamed went to various parts of what was then Province Wellesley (now Seberang Prai) in a friend's taxi to snap photographs of three newly constructed arches on the eve of Merdeka.

Fifty years later, the photographs, which have turned yellow with age, bring back fond memories for the 67-year-old retired teacher.

"The wooden arches were built by the villagers in true *gotong-royong* spirit to celebrate Merdeka.

"While the men bought the raw materials and put up the structure, the women folk prepared *teh-o* and biscuits. Work only stopped at nightfall as there was no electricity then," Md Zain reminisced.

He said his best shot was that of a



**Sentimental print:** Md Zain showing a photograph of the 1957 Merdeka arch in Sungai Aceh.

7.5m-tall arch at the junction of Sungai Aceh and Sungai Bakau which stood out among the others.

Inscribed on the arch were the words, "Selamat Merdeka 1957" and its translation in Chinese and Jawi.

There were also two photographs of Bapa Malaysia Tunku Abdul Rahman on both sides of the arch.

"Among those who posed for the photographs were former Sungai Aceh state assemblyman Datuk Ahmad Salleh and my best friend, Abdullah Idris, a taxi driver. Abdullah drove me in his taxi as we went around taking photographs."

Md Zain said another arch was built in Sungai Bakau, at the Penang-

Perak border near Parit Buntar.

This arch, he said, had the words, "Selamat Malaya Merdeka" in the middle and translations in Tamil and Chinese on either side, as well as a photograph of the Tunku in the middle.

The third arch, with Jawi inscriptions, was erected in Sungai Udang.