

THE STAR

DATE: 05/08/2007

# Snail mail still cherished

Tunku's nephew sends N-Day greetings the old-fashioned way

The Star 5/8/2007

By ZARINAH DAUD  
north@thestar.com.my

**PENANG:** At a time when the short message service (SMS) has become a popular mode of sending greetings, Tunku Datuk Dr Ismail Jawa believes it's still cool to send his National Day greetings to friends and loved ones by slow mail.

The nephew of first prime minister Tunku Abdul Rahman said he sent out 400 greetings cards specially designed to capture the mood of Merdeka last month.

And, not surprisingly, the responses he received reflected the generations that his recipients – aged 17 to 85 – represent.

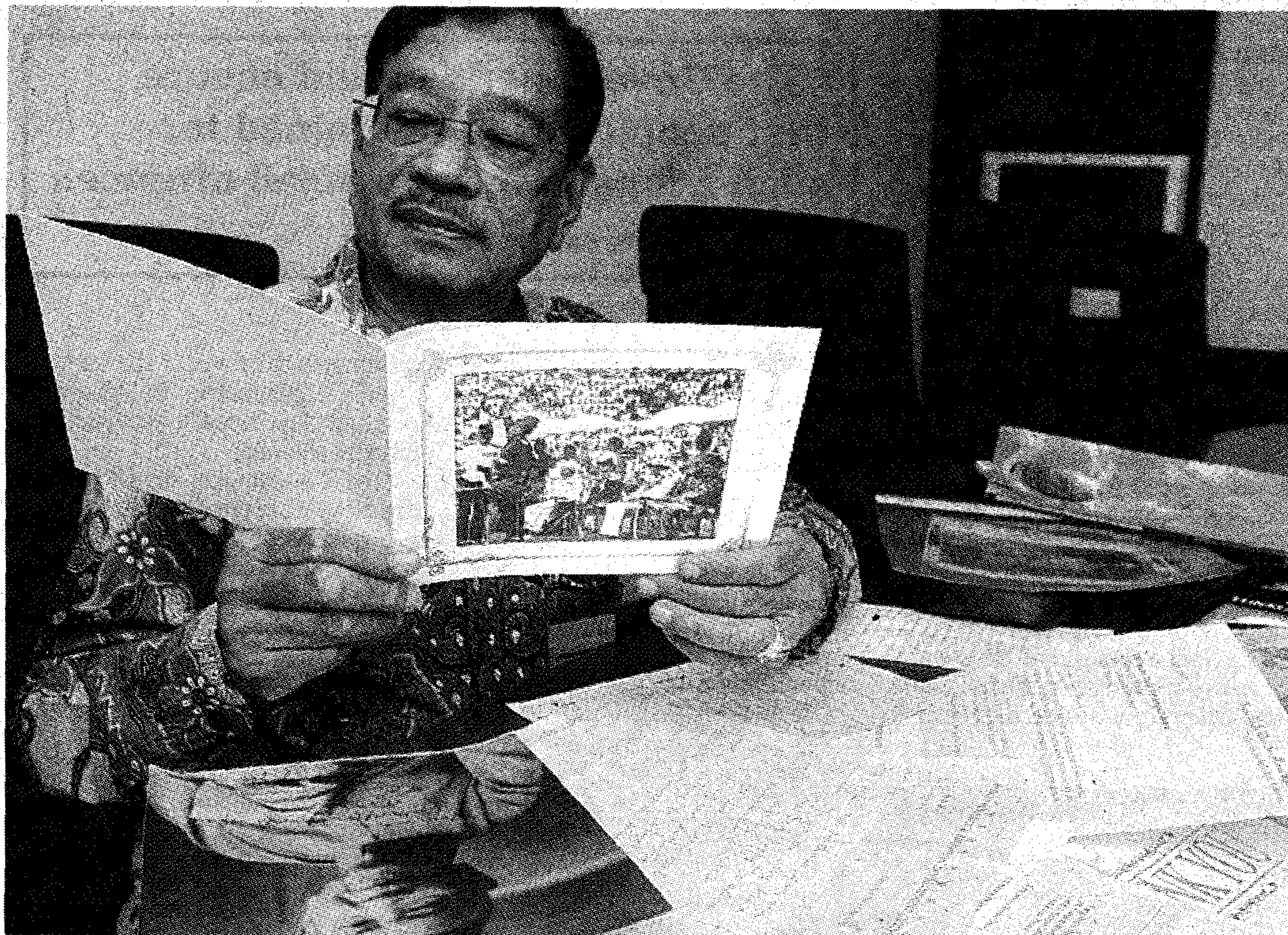
Tunku Ismail, who turns 70 on Aug 31, said the young generation replied via SMSes, the elder post-Merdeka group made polite calls while the elderly recipients replied with handwritten letters thanking him for the gesture.

The grandfather of two added that he sent out more cards to the young, mainly his nephews and nieces, in order to make them understand the significance of Merdeka.

"I want my relatives and friends to understand the true meaning of Independence and cherish the day when my uncle led the cheers of *Merdeka!* on Aug 31, 1957," he said.

Aptly, the former educationist whose father, Tunku Muhammad Jawa was the elder brother of the late prime minister, depicted on the cover of his greeting card a picture of Tunku Abdul Rahman proclaiming the country's independence at Merdeka Stadium.

In the inside page is the proclamation itself, while on the third page is the greeting from Tunku Ismail: "Wishing you good health,



**Truly meaningful:** Tunku Ismail showing his specially designed wishing card marking the 50th anniversary of Independence.

happiness and prosperity as Malaysia celebrates its 50th anniversary of Independence on 31 August 2007."

He said his greeting carries a strong message, pointing out that Malaysians by now should strive for prosperity to narrow the gap between the rich and poor.

"Celebrating Merdeka is not just about gathering at the field for the countdown or flying the *Jalur Gemilang* in schools.

"We have to understand and cher-

ish the struggles of our forefathers. Merdeka is about respecting others, especially the elderly.

"Our youngsters take the country's Independence for granted. To them, it is a day of celebration.

"They decorate schools and buildings but forget it all when they go home.

"Some of them do not even know the names of their great-grandparents, what more the names of our freedom fighters?"

Tunku Ismail suggested that

schools organise more excursions for students to memorials of previous prime ministers to inculcate a sense of patriotism and respect for the elders among them.

Citing the United States, he said schools there conduct tours to places rich in history to build the spirit of patriotism among their students.

"Americans are very patriotic about their country."

"I will send out another greeting card when we celebrate the 60th anniversary. *Insyallah*," he added.