

Tell real story of Kampong Glam

I recently went to Kampong Glam to view the arch that is being built in accordance with the memorandum of intent signed by the Singapore and Omani governments.

Four generations of my family were born and raised in Kampong Glam, and I can safely say that most of its residents belong to the Malay ethnic groups, such as the Javanese and Baweanese. There were pockets of Indians and Arabs, but most of them had been assimi-

lated into the Malay culture and lived like the Malays. So why should we build an arch that reflects other people's history?

I could be mistaken, but there was little evidence indicating that Kampong Glam had any ties to the Omanis. It may be true that the maritime trade once brought seafarers from Oman and other Middle Eastern countries. However, the majority of the traders then came from the Malay Archipelago.

I'm tired of hearing tour guides spouting wrong facts. Why do we not tell the real story of Kampong Glam – about Bussorah Street, also known as Kampong Kaji, which served as the pilgrim hub of the region; and the contribution of the people of Kampong Glam, many of whom were entrepreneurs?

The arch gives the impression that Kampong Glam was an Arab quarter, and this image will slowly erode memories of the contributions of the Malays to Singapore.

Hidayah Amin (Ms)