



One of the Bukit Peringgit bungalows which will be turned into a historical gallery.

Colonial-era bungalows to become historical galleries

MALACCA: Ten British colonial-era bungalows at Bukit Peringgit will be converted into international historical galleries by Aug 31.

Nine of the buildings will be given to foreign embassies to exhibit artifacts, artwork and documents with historical links with Malaysia.

"The embassies only need to pay for the electricity and water, the bungalows are free," said Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Mohd Rustam yesterday.

Speaking after launching the seventh International Malacca Twin Cities Convention involving representatives of nine foreign embassies at the Malacca International Trade Centre, he said the Cuban embassy would be the first to be given a bungalow.

"The Cuban historical gallery is expected to be opened by the end of

June."

Other occupants of the bungalows dating back more than a century will be the embassies of Portugal, the Netherlands, Chile, Japan, Yemen, China and the high commissions of Britain and India. The last bungalow will be maintained by Malaysia.

The galleries, Mohd Ali said, would help promote Malacca as a top tourist destination in Malaysia.

"All the countries maintaining the galleries have historical links with the state," he said, adding that a library would be built at each gallery and would attract students and historical researchers to the state.

Mohd Ali said if the response to the project was favourable, more galleries would be set up.

"There is a need to preserve Bukit Peringgit as a historical area as a lot

of buildings were built during the British era. We do not want Bukit Peringgit to be just another housing area in the state."

The bungalows were built by the British colonial office and used as homes for government officials during the 19th century.

The hill was also the site for the former homes of the chief minister and state secretary. These were converted to the Malacca chief minister's gallery and a VIP guest house, respectively.

At the foot of the hill is the former home of former deputy prime minister Tun Ghafar Baba, who was once chief minister. This, too, had been converted into a gallery.

The Malacca Historic City Council will be co-ordinating and taking care of the gallery buildings.