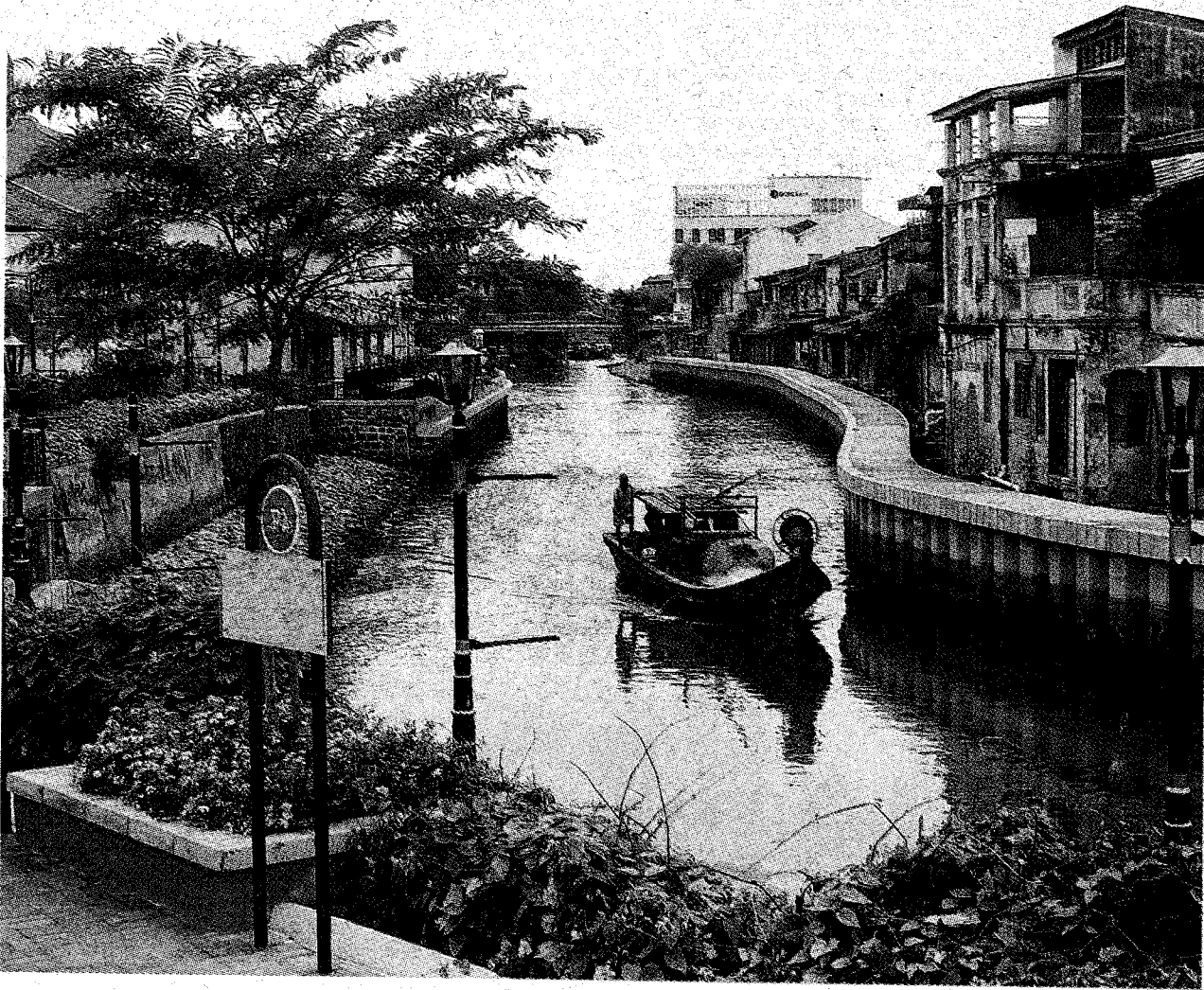


Malacca 'returns' to the 15th century

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Sungai Melaka is one of the state's most popular tourist attractions. The government is planning to replicate the busy surroundings of the river during the Malacca Sultanate era.

MALACCA: Fifteenth-century Malacca was a busy marketplace, with trading ships from around the world sailing up and down its river.

Inspired by the past, the state government aims to replicate the busy surroundings of the river in the Malacca Sultanate era.

By April next year, tourists will be able to get a feel of this historic city's heyday.

"We are going to build more

replicas of ships which will serve as museums along Sungai Melaka," said Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam.

Speaking after a state exco meeting at Seri Negeri yesterday, Mohd Ali said he already had two ships in mind.

The first is *Kapal Dendang Berahi*, the ship in which Sultan Mansur Shah sailed to Majapahit to wed its princess, while the second, to be named *Kapal Laksamana*

Cheng Ho, is a replica of the vessel used by the famous admiral.

Also in the pipeline is a watermill which will be built at the waterfront along Jalan Kota.

"This is so we can demonstrate to tourists how water was drawn from the river for drinking purposes during that era," said Mohd Ali.

On another project, the Chief Minister said a RM25 million marina would be constructed at the firth of the river.

It will have a 40-berth pontoon, and navigation aids for boats.

He said Malaysian Resources Corporation Bhd had been appointed to construct the marina and would appoint local companies as sub-contractors.

The state government aims to draw about seven million tourists to Malacca next year and the river project alone is said to be capable of attracting more than a million people.