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# M'sia invited to expand routes

Myanmar wants our airlines to fly on to Mandalay

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**PUTRAJAYA:** Airlines from Malaysia have been invited to expand their services in Myanmar by extending their routes to Mandalay.

The offer came from Myanmar president Thein Sein during a meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak yesterday.

Currently, Malaysia Airlines (MAS) and AirAsia only have flights between Kuala Lumpur and Yangon.

The Myanmar leader suggested the route to be KL-Yangon-Mandalay, saying that the airlines could pick up passengers in the capital before flying some 650km north to Mandalay.

Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Anifah Aman said Najib agreed to speak to MAS or AirAsia to look into the offer.

"However, he informed Thein Sein that it would be a business decision to be made by the airlines," he told newsmen after the meeting at the Prime Minister's Office here.

Prior to the event, Najib and Thein Sein held a four-eyed discussion.

Anifah said the leaders also discussed Rohingya Muslims who were not recognised as Myanmar citizens by the Malaysian Government.

"We have to respect the law of Myanmar," Anifah said.

"Malaysia is concerned because we have quite a sizeable number of the community in the country but we will continue engaging them in



**Strengthening ties:** Najib and Thein Sein during the Myanmar leader's visit to the Prime Minister's Office in Putrajaya. — Bernama

the best interest of the Rohingyas," he added.

Anifah said Najib also raised Malaysia's concern over the spate of murder cases involving Myanmar nationals in the country.

"Both leaders have asked their respective home ministers to work closely on the matter," he said.

At least 20 Myanmar nationals were brutally murdered since January last year.

Anifah said Malaysia also agreed to waive visa requirement for Myanmar civil servants and businessmen, and expected a reciprocal move.

On trade and investment, Anifah said Myanmar offered Petronas to further explore oil fields in the country.

He said Thein Sein also agreed to consider favourably the Asean common time proposal.

"We hope the proposal could be one of the things to be achieved during our chairmanship of Asean," Anifah added.

Thein Sein was here on a two-day visit to Malaysia - his first since being appointed president in 2011 - at the invitation of the Yang di-Per-tuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah.

He and his wife Khin Khin Win left for home yesterday."