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Malacca seeks Firefly link to Batam

BATAM: The Malacca government will ask Firefly to operate direct flights from the Batu Berendam Airport in Malacca to the Hang Nadim Airport here.

Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam said the service was important to strengthen ties between Malacca and the Indonesian island and to encourage tourism.

"Many people in the Riau islands including Batam are keen to come to Malacca, especially to seek medical treatment under the health tourism programme," he said after opening the Gedung Asrama Quran Centre here yesterday.

The centre was built at a cost of RM426,545, including RM100,000 from the Malacca gov-

ernment.

At the function the centre's hostel, which now accommodates 400 students, was named Asrama Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam. Also present was Riau Governor Ismeth Abdullah.

Mohd Ali said Firefly would serve the Batu Berendam-Singapore route from Sept 1 and he hoped the airline would include the Batu Berendam-Batam route.

Ismeth said if the direct flights from Malacca-Batam materialised; they would definitely foster ties between the people of Batam and Malacca.

Batam, which is 715 sq km in size, has a population of 991,400. — Bernama