

## KERATAN AKHBAR

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### Govt optimistic of achieving zero hardcore poverty by 2025



Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed (Bernama filepix)

JITRA (Sept 22): The government is optimistic of achieving the target of zero hardcore poverty by the end or 2025, with new integrated and holistic approaches in implementing the pilot projects towards increasing their income.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Economy) Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed said this confidence is based on the government's earnestness in raising strategic cooperation with various parties including the universities, non-governmental organisations and private sector, in helping this group get out of the poverty line.

He said the first phase of the pilot projects in 80 localities towards helping the target group were completed this year, while the second phase of the projects involving 110 localities would start in the middle of October, with the target of helping about 5,000 households.

"(Until Sept 15), there were 130,709 hardcore poor people. We are confident that the number will drop; we should have the ambition and ability to make Malaysia a country which has various parties such as the state governments and departments that will work together in achieving the target."

Mustapa said this at a news conference after officiating at the Northern Corridor Economic Region (NCER)'s Community Transformation Awards ceremony, which was also attended by Chief Executive of the Northern Corridor Implementation Authority (NCIA) Mohamad Haris Kader Sultan here on Thursday (Sept 22).

He said his department would do close, regular monitoring of the implementation of the pilot projects, so that the income of the target group could be increased in order to take them out of poverty.

On another matter, Mustapa suggested for tourism operators to promote their products more aggressively and creatively, so as to attract more local tourists to spend their holidays domestically, in order to raise cashflow within the country.

"This is because at present, Malaysians seem to be more inclined to be visiting other countries, especially neighbouring Thailand.

"This trend poses a challenge for the government and local tourism industry players to be more aggressive in their promotional efforts, as a high cashflow to other countries would be a bigger loss for Malaysia," he said.