



# TheStar

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## Orang Asli strike gold with mushroom farming

GUA MUSANG: The Mendriq Orang Asli community in Kampung Kuala Lah here has harvested more than 300kg of grey oyster mushrooms cultivated since two months ago.

Cedong Kapit, 61, said villagers no longer need to look for forest produce because their daily routine has shifted to tending two mushroom blocks.

She said through the mushroom planting project, which is an initiative of the Economy Ministry's Hardcore Poverty Eradication (BMT) programme, 10 participants were selected to carry out the pioneer project to help them earn extra income.

"We started planting mushrooms on Aug 6 and harvested the first crop on Aug 28.

"We can harvest 10kg of mushrooms every day or more than 300kg in a month. These mushrooms are sold for between RM10 and RM12 per kg," she said when met by reporters in Kampung Kuala Lah recently, Bernama reported.

Johar Keladi, 48, said participating in the programme has provided him with a wealth of knowledge about mushroom farming.

"My 36-year-old friend Hassan Jusoh and I are in charge of making sure that the right amount of ingredients are used and the blocks are steamed first before planting the mushrooms.

"It might seem easy to grow oyster mushroom blocks, but there are some strenuous tasks that need to be done by the men, like mixing sawdust with limestone paste and rice bran," he said.

Siti Adis, 40, hopes that government agencies will continue to help the Orang Asli community in the country generate additional income and elevate their economic status.

"I thank the Orang Asli Development Department (Jako) and the government agencies for providing me the opportunity and support to raise my family's standard of living," she said.

