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## Do not rely on subsidies, PM advises padi farmers

GURUN, Fri: Padi farmers should look into ways to improve their livelihood such as by seeking ways to increase their yields or merge among themselves, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the government cannot continuously increase subsidies to them for they need to change their ways to

improve themselves.

Replying to a question from a participant in a Smart Partnership seminar here today, he said: "I am not going to be popular for saying this, but I won't be popular just by offering more money to the people.

"We have done so much already for them. By owning a small plot of land cultivating padi, even if the govern-

ment pours in subsidies and financial assistance, the farmer will not become rich. He must be willing to merge with others or work elsewhere.

"We have given farmers subsidies to enable them to plant twice yearly, but they don't do that.

"During one of my visits in England, I came across eight people cultivating

10,000 acres of land and they made millions. Our farmers need to change their ways if they want to improve."

Mahathir said bumiputras must learn that success does not come easy for they have to work for it and learn as well.

"We give bumiputras 30% equity in projects but if they keep selling their share, they won't be successful," he said.