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Don't increase assessment rates for the time being

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IT is most disheartening to note that when the country is facing economic problems and people are tightening their belts to survive, local authorities like the Petaling Jaya and Ipoh Municipal Councils have deemed it fit to increase assessment rates.

The move will definitely cause further hardship, particularly to people with fixed incomes, like pensioners and wage earners.

Time and again, the Prime Minister has reiterated that the Government, in its efforts to overcome the economic downturn, will not burden the people. Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has appealed to the business community not to raise the prices of goods and services indiscriminately. He has even warned that the Government will not hesitate to introduce legislation to book irresponsible traders.

The local authorities should endeavour to manage their affairs as efficiently as possible and refrain (at least for now) from further taxing the rate-payers.

It is felt that the Ministry of Local Government and Housing should direct local authorities to put on hold the proposed increase in assessment until the economy recovers and people can afford to pay higher rates.