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Find substitutes if prices soar indiscriminately

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IT is good that non-governmental organisations are helping to monitor the prices of goods due to the proposed increase in the price of petroleum products.

Prices of goods go up immediately when there are increases in the price of petroleum products, or in certain taxes or during festive seasons.

However, when there are reductions they seem to take a long, long time to come down.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad (NST, Sept 23) commented that even if there was a 10 per cent increase in oil prices, it would only involve a 0.5 per cent increase in production costs as oil price constitutes only five per cent of overall costs.

Will traders use this as an opportunity to increase their prices? If they do, what "punishment" will be meted out to them? We should look for substitutes if prices of goods go up indiscriminately.