

# DBKL told to keep tabs on the city's ageing trees

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) has now been ordered to come up with new guidelines to manage the city's ageing trees, even as an expert said that the tragedy in the city could have been averted if its roots had not been curtailed.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department (Federal Territories) Dr Zaliha Mustafa said it was important to catalogue older trees, many of which are between

50 and 80 years old, due to the unpredictable weather conditions.

Dr Zaliha, who visited the site near Jalan Sultan Ismail where a man was killed after a large tree toppled during a thunderstorm, said the local authority conducts biennial inspections with a certified arborist.

"This tree was under private supervision, but we need to increase the frequency of these

inspections, especially given the unpredictable weather conditions," she told a press conference at the site.

"Sometimes trees appear healthy on the outside, but they are internally not, which is why it's critical to establish proper guidelines," she said during her visit, accompanied by Kuala Lumpur Mayor Datuk Seri Kamarulzaman Mat Salleh.

Meanwhile, certified arborist

Dr Ahmad Ainuddin Nuruddin said the tree could have fallen due to "root crown failure".

"It looks like it failed at the root crown. Root decay causes root crown failure," he told *The Star*.

Dr Ahmad, a retired professor, said the root decay could have been caused by restricted root growth due to the limited space caused by development.

"Development without looking at the tree growth requirements,

with not enough space for roots to grow," he said.

Photos of the incident yesterday showed that the area around the tree root had been cemented over.

Dr Ahmad said raintrees are suitable to be planted in the city if they are properly maintained.

"Some old trees are good," he said, adding that DBKL needed to do a detailed risk assessment of old trees.