

By **SHALINI RAVINDRAN**
and **LEW GUAN XI**
metro@thestar.com.my

DBKL urged to not go on felling spree

Urban trees should be managed accordingly to ensure their health, say stakeholders

LOCAL authorities are being urged to avoid indiscriminately chopping down trees.

Community leaders said the local authorities should adopt a measured response instead, with the focus on monitoring and maintenance mechanisms for urban trees.

They are appealing to the local authorities after a huge rain tree toppled onto Jalan Sultan Ismail, Kuala Lumpur, on Tuesday affecting 17 vehicles.

Save Kuala Lumpur (SKL) coalition chairman Datuk M. Ali said the local government must apply consistency.

“Development is being allowed to happen to the point where pedestrian walkways are getting narrower.

“Yet, these large and old trees are left there. How are they expected to stay strong and stable?” he said.

Ali said these trees should be managed in accordance with appropriate arboricultural practices, including proper upkeep that must include regular and periodical pruning and trimming of the overgrown trees.

“Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) has internal arborists and (external) consultants they work with, who can determine the health of the trees,” he pointed out.

He said a mindset shift towards a culture of maintenance, rather than a reactive one, was needed.

Ampang Jaya People’s Consultative Council advisor M. Thomas said there were many mature trees which were healthy but needed regular maintenance.

“Pruning and other methods should be used to maintain the health of these trees, instead of simply cutting it down.

“The situation in Ampang Jaya is mostly controlled, although the trees in the older neighbourhoods should be looked at.



Alam Flora contractor seen cleaning up debris at the site of uprooted tree on Jalan Sultan Ismail. — YAP CHEE HONG/The Star

“Some trees are infested with white ants or have rotten roots that are not visible.”

Thomas added that the local council must monitor the type of trees that were being planted.

Kepong MP Lim Lip Eng said DBKL must establish a clear set of standard operating procedures to manage old and huge trees that could pose a safety risk.

He welcomed Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department (Federal Territories) Dr Zaliha Mustafa’s instruction for DBKL to come up with new guidelines to

manage the city’s ageing trees, which should include privately supervised trees.

“The tree is located right next to one of the busiest roads in Kuala Lumpur.

“DBKL must shoulder the responsibility to care for public safety, whether the tree is publicly or privately supervised,” he said.

Lim also hoped for new guidelines to reduce the bureaucracy involved in managing ageing trees.

“Presently DBKL needs to hold

a lot of meetings with the relevant stakeholders before cutting a tree.

“Budget is also an issue as the cost to cut a tree can reach RM25,000.

“The new guidelines could streamline the management of ageing trees and DBKL should be able to act without having to hold tedious meetings,” he added.

Lim said his office would offer assistance to the family members of the deceased and those who suffered damage in the May 7 incident.



Thomas says local councils must monitor the types of trees being planted.

One person died and two were injured. A total of 17 vehicles were damaged.

During a site visit with Kuala Lumpur mayor Datuk Seri Kamarulzaman Mat Salleh, Dr Zaliha said the tree was supervised privately by a certified arborist and biennial inspections had been conducted.

Several deaths and injuries resulting from falling trees have been reported in the Klang Valley over the past several years.

In Ampang Jaya, two men were killed when a storm uprooted a 40-year-old tree which fell onto their vehicles in Jalan Bukit Belacan, Kampung Lembah Jaya Utara on Dec 19, 2023.

Ampang Jaya Municipal Council (MPAJ) later said that the roots of the toppled Ficus tree had rotted but was not visible from the outside.

On Oct 31, 2023, a woman was killed when a tree fell on her car as she was driving along Jalan Ulu Yam-Gombak in Selangor.

In 2018, a motorcyclist and his pillion were injured after a 130-year-old tree fell on Jalan Ampang near the Petronas Twin Towers.

At the time, DBKL said the rotting root of the tree, which was a rain tree species, had affected its growth, making it unstable.