

Harness community power for a safer Kuala Lumpur

ON May 7, tragedy struck when an uprooted tree wreaked havoc on Jalan Sultan Ismail in Kuala Lumpur, damaging 17 vehicles and claiming a life ("One dead, another injured as tree falls in KL city centre", *The Star*; online at bit.ly/3USabcF). This incident serves as a grim reminder of the urgent need for proactive measures to prevent such catastrophes.

I believe it is the responsibility of Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) to ensure the safety of our streets. However, it would of course be daunting to monitor every tree lining our roads what with budget and manpower constraints – in fact, I dare to challenge the notion and say that it's impractical or economically unfeasible.

So why not enlist the support of the very people who traverse these streets daily, the ordinary citizens, the rakyat? With our assistance, half the battle is already won.

Imagine a scenario where concerned individuals can swiftly report the presence of unhealthy trees via a dedicated hotline or user-friendly app interface.

Yes, DBKL has a hotline for general complaints, but its reach is limited. Not many KLites are aware of this contact point. Whenever an untoward or emergency incident occurs, there is a need for a focused mechanism, eg a short-term dedicated hotline that actively encourages the public to report potential hazards, in this case, diseased or old trees. DBKL should disseminate this information through the media, while also reminding citizens of all the avenues available to them for contacting the authorities.

Moreover, DBKL should engage with Residents' Associations and NGOs to amplify awareness of civic responsibility. By harnessing community networks, we

empower residents to take ownership of their safety and that of their neighbours. With widespread dissemination of information and an accessible reporting system, individuals will feel empowered to conduct inspections in their neighbourhoods, easing the burden on DBKL's resources.

The public stands ready to assist, but the onus is on the authorities to facilitate this collaboration. It's time to tap into the collective power of the people, fostering a community spirit where everyone plays a role in ensuring our streets are safe for all.

Let's not wait for more tragedies to spur action. Together, let's make our voices heard and demand a safer Kuala Lumpur.

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