

# Case of falling trees being looked into

## Climate change possible root cause of recent incidents

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**KLANG:** A holistic approach will be taken to find out whether climate change is one of the root causes of the falling trees in cities across the country, says Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad.

The Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister said this when asked if climate change caused the recent incidents of uprooted large trees in George Town and Kuala Lumpur.

“There is a chance that changing weather patterns could also play a part in this issue, which we will have to seriously look into.

“While the connection between the two, for now, is still relatively unknown, we cannot disregard the possibility,” he said after launching Alam Be-Leaf Mangrove Planting Programme 2024 here yesterday.

To this, he said holistic research

into the sudden surge of falling trees in urban areas would be conducted immediately and will involve the Forestry Department.

“Local government authorities may have their own guidelines, but we will have to look at the issue as a whole along with feedback from the Forestry Department. While different people may have different views on the need to fell overgrown trees, the people’s safety must be prioritised.

“Ideally, we want to preserve as many trees as possible since it takes many years to replace one, but if it causes harm, then steps must be taken,” added Nik Nazmi.

This comes after a large 50-year-old tree fell on Jalan Sultan Ismail in Kuala Lumpur on May 7 following a sudden downpour, killing one man and injuring two other people while also damaging 17 vehicles and disrupting monorail services for the rest of the day.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL)-appointed certified arborists have since identified 28 other trees in



**For a greener land:** A mangrove-planting event and the launch of Alam Be-Leaf Programme 2024 sees participants getting into it. — RAJA FAISAL HISHAN/The Star

the city as high-risk in its latest periodic inspection, and these are expected to be felled soon.

The danger of falling trees has also hit Penang’s urban areas with frequent reports of falling trees injuring people or destroying property recently.

This includes an 80-year-old man who was injured after a tree fell on him on May 8 at the Penang Botanic Gardens while another massive tree fell across Jalan Macalister in Georgetown on May 11, heavily damaging five cars.

Meanwhile, on a separate issue, Nik Nazmi urged the states to incorporate public inquiry procedures into their forestry laws that

require the replacement of forest areas after the degazettement of an existing forest area. He said only Selangor and Perlis have incorporated public inquiry procedures into their forestry laws.

“We have reminded other state governments to make the same amendment to the relevant enactments because we understand that forests are a state matter.

“If they degazette a forest area, the state government must replace it with a new one and we hope they can comply with the rule,” he said.

Nik Nazmi gave an example of how Kelantan’s deforestation activities in pursuit of develop-

ment were causing other costly problems.

“We have allocated nearly RM2bil for flood mitigation and hundreds of millions of ringgit for water supply. We are also trying to revive the port in Tok Bali.

“Then we deforest an area for a profit of RM200mil to RM300mil, after that, there are requests for a budget for flood mitigation and water supply – that is unreasonable and does not add up.

“I understand in Kelantan they argue that development is still needed, but we need to discuss it thoroughly and try to minimise the impact on the environment,” he added.