

I REFER to the report “King walks 3.2km to inspect KL’s Jalan Gallagher, highlights litter, clogged drains” (*The Star*, July 12).

Reports on the recent inspection by His Majesty Sultan Ibrahim, King of Malaysia, along Jalan Gallagher in Kuala Lumpur, and the swift clean-up that followed, offer a sobering glimpse into KL City Hall’s (DBKL) reactive operating culture. Litter, clogged drains, fallen tree branches and even

Local authorities must adopt proactive approach

monkeys roaming freely were only addressed after the King raised his concerns.

DBKL’s gesture of gratitude in its public statement is appreciated. However, gratitude alone cannot mop the streets, flush the drains or keep our environment safe.

As a city of over two million people armed with smartphones,

Kuala Lumpur has an untapped force of concerned citizens ready to serve as the eyes and ears of the local authorities.

Yet, the public remains largely sidelined, as there is no simple, trusted system for reporting issues.

Yes, hotlines are available, but they are not widely publicised, hence there is no incen-

tive to act. Worse, those who try are often betrayed when their identities are revealed to business owners whose hygiene violations were flagged.

Cleanliness in public places is a basic right, hence enforcement should not be triggered by royal attention; it should be a daily commitment.

DBKL, and all local authori-

ties by extension, must adopt proactive and creative models of urban governance. Civic participation should be encouraged, protected and sustained. It should not be discouraged by fear of retaliation or bureaucratic apathy.

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