

# Old raintree falls on newly-weds

Lee: Authorities must always maintain trees properly



**Unexpected:** The raintree (right) after it fell across Jalan Ampang near Petronas Twin Towers and a fireman and a bystander helping the pillion rider hit by the tree.



PETALING JAYA: Local authorities must adopt a strict maintenance culture to ensure trees in cities around the country are healthy and do not pose a safety risk to residents, says Tan Sri Lee Lam Thye.

Lee, a former member of the Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) Advisory Board, said uprooted trees or falling branches were a hazard.

"With planning, advanced technology and advice from agencies such as the Forest Research Institute Malaysia and other tree experts, we can ensure the old trees lining some of the main roads are properly managed, maintained and made safe," he said in a statement.

Lee, the chairman of the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, was commenting on the tree that fell and injured a newly-wed couple in Jalan Ampang, Kuala Lumpur, early yesterday morning.

He urged local authorities to set up a dedicated unit to see that trees and shrubs are regularly inspected and pruned so that they do not obstruct traffic lights and road signs.

"Overgrowth that blocks road signs endangers the lives of road users who ply the route," he said.

The incident was a reminder to local authorities on the need for a strict maintenance culture, he said.

"It should not be looked upon as a freak accident since similar cases were reported before," he said.

"On May 4 last year, a student was killed when his motorcycle was struck by a falling tree branch in Jalan Ayer Molek, Melaka.

"On Oct 12, 2014, two policemen died when a tree fell on the Kampung Attap beat base in Kuala Lumpur during a thunderstorm."

## Hubby critical after tree hits couple on a motorcycle

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Two newly-weds were hurt, one of them critically, by a large 130-year-old raintree that fell along Jalan Ampang here.

The incident, which occurred at about 7.30am yesterday, also caused gridlock in parts of the city.

Kuala Lumpur Fire and Rescue Department director Khirudin Drahan said 10 firemen were sent to rescue the couple, whose motorcycle was hit as the tree fell.

"It occurred near Menara Public Bank in Jalan Ampang.

"The victims were sent to Kuala

Lumpur Hospital for treatment.

"The motorcyclist is in critical condition while the pillion rider is stable," he said when contacted.

It is believed the husband was the motorcyclist while the wife rode pillion.

A car was also hit and badly damaged by the tree, although the driver was unharmed.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) workers took about two hours to cut up the fallen tree and clear the road.

DBKL corporate communications

director Fadzilah Abd Rashid said the raintree appeared to be in excellent condition following inspections in April and December last year.

"However, we discovered that the tree's roots were rotting upon closer inspection.

"It can't be seen, so the fall was unexpected," she said in a statement yesterday.

Following the incident, she said DBKL had taken several measures, including appointing an arborist to conduct physical checks on trees and identifying the high-risk ones

that need attention.

DBKL is also drawing up a maintenance plan for such high-risk trees.

"Arborists will propose relevant suggestions on tree maintenance, whether they can be retained, cut down and replaced, or cut down without replacement, after the physical checks," Fadzilah said.

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