

BBXPK



DBKL personnel clearing the road yesterday.



View of the scene from the upper window of a nearby building.

Huge tree **topples** near KLCC, 2 hurt

> Collapse caused by decaying roots, three lanes in Jalan Ampang blocked

BY HAIKAL JALIL
newsdesk@thesundaily.com

KUALA LUMPUR: A couple who just got married on Sunday were injured when a huge 130-year-old tree fell across Jalan Ampang in front of the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (KLCC) at 7.30am yesterday.

The incident, which Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) said is caused by root rot, resulted in a massive traffic jam during the rush hour.

Mira Ezva Abdul Rasid, 25, and Norazrul Ahmad, 37, who were on their way to work, fell off their motorcycle when it crashed into a car hit by the fallen tree.

Norazrul, who passed out following the crash, remained unconscious at press time.

"It happened so fast, the tree in front of us fell suddenly. My husband could not brake in time and we crashed into it (the car)," Mira, a

mall security guard, said.

When met at Hospital Kuala Lumpur, Mira said she was grateful to have survived the incident but was worried about her husband's condition.

"This is the biggest challenge for us as we were married for barely one day," said Mira, who is considering legal action. "We were lucky we were not crushed by the tree or our fate would have been very different."

Describing the incident as unforeseen, DBKL said the root rot could not be detected from the tree's appearance.

"The tree was in a good condition physically. However, observation at the site after the incident indicated that there was decay at its roots," it said in a statement.

"The decay had affected the growth at its roots, which caused the tree to become unstable and fall."

DBKL said the fallen tree was of the "Hujan-hujan" species, a common type that could be found along Jalan Ampang, which is one of the earliest road in the city.

It added the fallen tree is 130 years old and

had grown to a circumference of 4.65m.

DBKL said the trees along Jalan Ampang had undergone scheduled regular maintenance and the last maintenance was carried out as recent as December.

"The work involved during the last maintenance were the cutting down of three trees, trimming and crown reduction work

on 19 trees.

"It was made compulsory for contractors in charge of maintaining the trees to appoint an arborist to conduct physical inspection," it said.

"Based on the report by the arborist, DBKL will be able to identify trees that are at risk for action to be taken," it said.