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Lee: Authorities must always maintain trees properly

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 newlywed 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.”