



KERATAN AKHBAR

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Delving into the problem

DBKL to study mapping system covering KL's underground utility lines

KUALA LUMPUR: A hole in one is a rare achievement in golf, but what do you call it when three sinkholes appear in the city within three days? Surely something is up. Or rather, something down below needs to be looked into.

This is what Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) is pushing for.

It plans to call for an inter-agency study on a mapping system covering the city's underground utility lines in light of recent sinkholes.

City mayor Datuk Nor Hisham Ahmad Dahlan said the study, to be spearheaded by DBKL, would hopefully result in a comprehensive map of the cables, pipes and other systems that lie beneath the city.

"At the moment, Kuala Lumpur does not have a proper underground mapping system, so it is hard to predict when these pipes could burst and cause such an incident.

"The study will also look into the appearance of these sinkholes resulting from burst water pipes recently," he said.

He added that the exercise would involve the Mineral and Geoscience Department and utility companies.

"We need to determine the cause of these burst pipes and sinkholes, whether it is from overdevelopment or even heavy usage," he said, adding that the study would start next month.

Over three consecutive days, three sinkholes appeared in Kuala



Work in progress: Syabas personnel repairing the burst underground pipe along Jalan Dewan Bahasa in Kuala Lumpur.

Lumpur roads, which were said to have been caused by damaged underground water pipes.

The first was in Jalan Maharajalela on Nov 24, followed by the other two in Jalan Pinang and Jalan Dewan Bahasa.

But this problem of sinkholes caused by burst pipes has been reported elsewhere in Malaysia too, such as at a roundabout near Donggongon, Penampang, Sabah, on July 25; at Jalan Universiti in Perating Jaya on Oct 2; and at the junction of Persiaran Bandar Utama and First Avenue, also in PJ, on Oct 18.

The managing director of an insurance agency, who only wants to be identified as Ng, said vehicle owners were generally entitled to make insurance claims in cases when their vehicles were damaged when driven into sinkholes.

"As long as they have a first-party policy, the policyholder should be able to claim but this will affect his or her no-claim discount (NCD).

"However, if they only hold a third-party insurance, then they will not be able to claim at all from their insurer," she said.

Thomas Philip Advocates &

Solicitors partner Alliff Benjamin Suhaini said there were a few things to take into consideration when determining liability.

"First, we have to determine the party that owns or is responsible to maintain the road. It may be a government body or a private concessionaire.

"If there are third parties tasked with maintaining the road, they too may be held liable.

"Ultimately, it is for the court to decide on liability and any appointment of the same based on evidence," he said.