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Culture of maintenance must take precedence

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent call to adopt the "culture of maintenance" was certainly timely.

Over the years, a fair number of properties and facilities, including government-owned ones, are in a sorry state because of the lack of proper maintenance.

Visit the lavatories in most buildings and you will be greeted by an overpowering stench.

Step into the lift and you might hear squeaks, as if the lift cable will snap in the next few seconds.

Two government properties that will suffer a similar fate in the near future unless proper maintenance is conducted are the Customs, Immigrations and Quarantine Complex in Gelang Patah, Johor, and Bukit Komanwel Park in Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur.

Although the Gelang Patah CIQ complex is hardly two years old, the lack of proper maintenance is fast making the complex dilapidated.

Hairline cracks can be seen on the walls and water seeps through the cracks. Although one can see a small number of workers cleaning the complex, the standard of work does not reflect its stature.

In all probability, the defect liability period might have expired without anyone monitoring the flaws in the complex.

The lack of vehicles using the Second Link should not be an excuse for the Government to ignore the proper maintenance of the CIQ complex, especially after having spent such a huge sum on the project.

Less than three months after Dr Mahathir opened the National Stadium and other facilities in Bukit Jalil for the 16th Commonwealth Games, Bukit Komanwel - a public park - is now in a state of disrepair.

Information panels installed on concrete blocks surrounding one of the spherical structures on the hill have been vandalised beyond recognition.

Because of poor landscaping and maintenance, muddy water washes down the steps during heavy rain, turning them into mud traps.

The relevant authorities should seriously look into the proper maintenance of these properties and facilities before further defects incur high repair cost, which is ultimately borne by taxpayers.

We can be proud of having the tallest buildings, the longest bridge, the biggest shopping mall, state-of-the-art stadiums and the best infrastructure.

However, without proper maintenance, all these edifices will soon turn into eyesores, or worse, endanger the safety of their occupants.