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Potholes reflect local authorities' non-accountability

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LITTLE things can be indicative of a larger problem. In this case, it is the shameful conditions of the roads in Petaling Jaya.

In many parts of the world they would be considered sub-standard. They are a reflection of a far greater problem, which was alluded to by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad: a lack of ability or willingness to follow-up on projects started, to maintain standards, not being bothered about ongoing care and upkeep.

They also reflect a larger problem: people in position in local authorities are not accountable.

If I had a son or daughter owning a motorcycle, I would either ban them from using it or sue the Petaling Jaya Municipal Council.

For two weeks I noted (and phoned the council's office repeatedly to report) a gaping pothole in Jalan 16/1.

About five metres away, a broken drain grille had been protruding from the road surface for over a week before a sloppy repair job was done. I live just off Jalan 16/1 and have noted the same dangerous holes reappear again and again over the last few years.

Even as I write this letter, I see that the grille is again broken and protruding dangerously.

By the way, why install the drain grilles so that the rails run with the flow of traffic? Can you visualise your son's or daughter's thin bicycle tyre getting caught in such a trap?

I can show the council dozens of similar road conditions in several sections I use on a daily basis. I can show it along Jalan 17/1 where the fancy and expensive brick sidewalk is broken and overgrown, making it difficult, if not dangerous to walk.

I can show it at the Jalan Universiti roundabout road surface which breaks apart with monotonous regularity. I can show it through my tyre rim, damaged by a seven-inch deep pothole in Jalan 14/1.

I can have the officials ride in my car and listen to the rattles and feel the damaged suspension due to the poorly maintained roads.

Another point on non-accountability. Take a drive along Jalan Damansara, just past the junction of Jalan 16/1, towards Taman Tun Dr Ismail. Count the number of cars parked illegally on the roadside and at the adjacent petrol station every day.

This is the overflow from the massive development of the former forest reserve land in Section 16. The development will eventually swamp the area with people and cars.

The entire area (main roads, lanes, housing access roads, etc) will be one big parking lot. What happened to the zoning laws? What happened to plot ratios for control of building size and population density?

The other result of questionable development approval is now becoming apparent.

The number of illegal and filthy food hawker sites is growing. What are the health authorities doing?

If elected officials don't perform to their constituents' expectations, you can vote them out.

But, at the level of daily living, in our homes and cities, we can't. They are appointed.

In the end no accountability and responsibility result in a poor standard of living.

