



FILTHY:
A health official told the court that the cooking area was 'very dirty' when he visited the stall one day after the affected patrons ate there.

Chopping board had faecal bacteria

THE chopping board used to cut cooked food items at Rojak Geylang Serai was contaminated with two types of bacteria.

One of them, faecal coliform, originates from faeces.

It indicates "the presence of faecal cross-contamination and is indicative of poor sanitary and hygiene conditions", according to the investigation report on the deaths of two women who ate at the stall on 3 Apr last year.

They had died after eating Indian rojak at Mr Sheik Alauddin Mohideen's stall. The report was read aloud during the joint inquiry into the deaths yesterday.

The other type of bacteria, known as *Staphylococcus aureus*, is commonly found in human skin.

"Its presence on the chopping board is indicative of lapses in personal hygiene standards," the report further stated.

When queried about these findings, Mr Abdul Jappar Peer Mohamed, the stall assistant who used the chopping board to cut the food items, said that he used gloves to do his work.

"I do not touch the food items with my bare hands," he said.

He also said that he would wash the chopping board every day and the knife every half an hour.

State Coroner Victor Yeo asked: "What sort of personal hygiene standards do you actually adhere to?"

Mr Abdul Jappar told the court that he would use soap to wash his hands when he went to the toilet. He would wipe his hands and wear gloves when he returned to the stall.

"After that, I would wipe the chopping board cleanly and only after that I would start cutting the food items," he said.

Earlier, Mr Abdul Rahman Osman, a senior public health officer from the Ministry of Health, told the court that he found the stall poorly maintained when he inspected it on the morning of 4 Apr last year.

This was immediately after Mr Alauddin had been told to stop business at the stall.

"The stall was coated with food scum and food waste, infested with cockroaches and smelt of insecticide," Mr Abdul Rahman said.

Taking the court through photographs he took of the stall that morning, he described the cooking area as "very dirty" and "things hanging all over the place", which "indicates poor housekeeping".

He also found eight nymph cockroaches in the stall.

Mr Abdul Rahman told the court that he had asked Mr Alauddin's younger son, Mr Allaudin Mohamad Yasin, if he had re-used the previous day's gravy and sold it at the stall.

Mr Allaudin admitted that he did.

"But when I met him on 6 Apr (and asked him the same question), he denied it," Mr Abdul Rahman said.