

Hong Lim Food Centre to close for upgrading

Stallholders will move to temporary premises at Speakers' Corner

THE popular Hong Lim Market and Food Centre in Upper Cross Street will be closed for a facelift in March next year.

Some of its cooked-food hawkers and wet market stallholders will move to temporary premises in a seldom-used part of Speakers' Corner less than 200m away.

In renovations that will cost the National Environment Agency (NEA) \$6 million, the 31-year-old centre with 101 hawker stalls and 52 market stalls will be given wider passageways and improved access for the elderly and the handi-

capped. Its ventilation and toilets will also be improved. The facelift is expected to be completed in the first half of 2011.

Mr Richard Lim, who chairs the Hong Lim Complex Hawkers Association, said regular patrons of the stalls selling rice dumplings, laksa, *char kway teow* and porridge can still get their fixes at the temporary market.

The cost of setting that up will come out of the pockets of those making the move - hawkers will bear \$13,500 and market stallholders, \$8,500.

Some 47 hawkers and 15 wet market stallholders will move over.

Among those making the move are Mr T.Y. Lim and Mr Chan Hou Wah, who run the China Street Cooked Fish and Ri Ri Xin Fresh Fruit Juice

stalls respectively.

But the family-run Hua Yi Wanton Noodle stall will take a break until the renovations are completed. The owner's 28-year-old daughter, who wanted to be known only as Ms Yip, said: "It is too expensive to move to the temporary market. So we will work part-time elsewhere and take the time to attend courses and pick up new skills to improve ourselves in the meantime."

The NEA said activities at Speakers' Corner will not be affected by the market's move.

The boundaries of Singapore's version of London's Hyde Park will be redrawn next month and reinstated when the temporary market is demolished.

LIM WEI CHEAN



The 31-year-old Hong Lim Market and Food Centre will be given wider passageways and improved access for the elderly and the handicapped. Its toilets will also be improved. PHOTO: LIANHE ZAOBAO