

Geylang Serai Indian rojak stallholder to be charged

THE man at the centre of the Indian rojak food poisoning incident will appear in court next month.

Mr Sheik Allaudin Mohideen, 70, will be charged on three counts: selling food unfit for human consumption, failing to keep his chopping board clean, and failing to keep his fridge tray clean.

The Attorney-General's Chambers and the National Environment Agency (NEA) said in a statement yesterday that his case will be heard on May 11.

Two women died and more than 150 people became ill after eating food from Mr Sheik's stall at the Geylang Serai temporary food market in April last year.

It was one of Singapore's worst incidences of food poisoning in recent years.

A coroner's inquiry into the incident in February recorded a verdict of misadventure.

The State Coroner, Mr Victor Yeo, found that while the stall was no doubt unhygienic and poorly maintained, the incident was not a deliberate or intentional act by Mr Sheik and his assistants.

Investigations by health officers last year found that the stall was dirty and cockroach-infested. Swabs taken from various areas also showed traces of

salmonella, which is commonly associated with food poisoning, as well as bacteria originating from faeces and human skin.

No further court action will be taken against his assistants, added the NEA.

The assistants, including Mr Sheik's two sons, will however only be able to resume work as food handlers after passing a basic food hygiene course.

His wife, Madam Hajara Aludeen, will also need to pass the course before she can operate her stall in the new Geylang Serai Market, which opened last July.

As she was not implicated in the Gey-

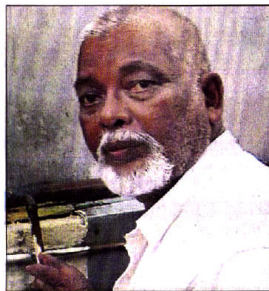
lang Serai food poisoning incident, she is eligible to operate the stall, said the NEA.

"She has been reminded that she is not allowed to engage her husband to work at the stall," said an NEA spokesman, adding that she could be fined \$2,000 and receive six demerit points if she was caught doing so.

Asked if Mr Sheik could still be a stallholder if convicted of the charges, the NEA would only say that court procedure "will be allowed to take its due course".

Meanwhile, he cannot operate a food stall or work as a food handler.

MARIA ALMENOAR



Two women died and more than 150 people fell ill in April last year after eating food from the stall run by Mr Sheik. ST FILE PHOTO