

Indian rojak seller to be charged

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THE man at the centre of what is possibly Singapore's worst case of mass food poisoning will be charged in court next month.

Mr Sheik Allaudin Mohideen, the stallholder of "Geylang Serai rojak" faces three counts of selling food unfit for human consumption at the stall, failing to keep his chopping board clean and failing to keep his fridge tray clean, a spokesman for the National Environment Agency (NEA) told The New Paper yesterday.

The 70-year-old will be charged on May 11.

For selling food unfit for human consumption, Mr Allaudin faces a maximum penalty of \$5,000.

For failing to keep his chopping board clean and failing to keep his fridge tray clean, he faces a maximum penalty of \$2,000 for each charge.

Two people died, 152 became ill and 48 were hospitalised.

Bacteria cause

The coroner's inquiry in February this year revealed that vibrio parahaemolyticus, a bacterium that causes watery diarrhoea and abdominal cramps, had led to the outbreak.

But vibrio, which is commonly found in seafood, was not detected in swab tests conducted on the Indian rojak stall and the adjoining mee siam stall where utensils and a fridge belonging to the Indian rojak stall owner were kept.

Instead, there were two other bacteria found: faecal coliform on raw lettuce and a chopping board, and staphylococcus aureus, which is commonly found on the human skin.

Dr Steven Ooi Peng Lim, deputy director at the

Ministry of Health's communicable diseases division, had said during the inquiry that it was highly unlikely that the two species caused or contributed to the poisoning.

But he said their presence showed that the stall had poor sanitary conditions and that it was conducive for cross-contamination.

And the risk of cross-contamination would have increased as the food handlers had used the refrigerator in the mee siam stall and had also washed utensils at the Indian rojak stall.

On Feb 10, State Coroner Victor Yeo had ruled the two deaths as misadventures.

Madam Aminah Samijo, 57, died on April 6 last year. Madam Norani Kassim, 59, died two days later.

The two women had underlying medical conditions, including heart disease, which contributed to their deaths.

Mr Allaudin's licence has since been suspended.

Sons not charged

The NEA spokesman said no further court action will be taken against Mr Allaudin's assistants, his two sons.

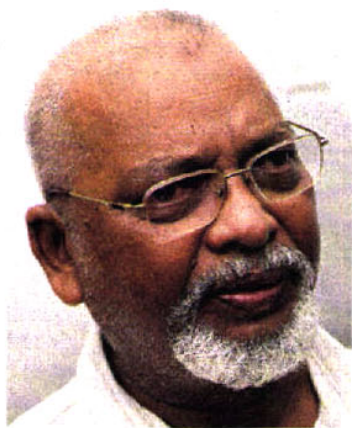
However, they can "resume as food handlers only after re-taking and satisfying the requirements of the Basic Food Hygiene Course".

The New Paper reported on Feb 27 that Mr Allaudin's wife had opened a stall under her name.

Madam Hajara Aludeen had successfully bid for a stall to sell "cooked food (halal)" at the new Geylang Serai market.

Other stallholders there told The New Paper that Mr Allaudin was last seen at the new stall in March.

Contractors have been seen at the stall but it has yet to begin operations.



HE MAY FACE FINES: Former Indian rojak stallholder Sheik Allaudin Mohideen.

TNP FILE PICTURE

The New Paper on **sunday** 1 Apr 09

ROJAK GEYLANG SERAI

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ONE WOMAN IN COMA

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THE NEW PAPER ON SUNDAY, APRIL 5