

New year, new markets

BY SIA LING XIN

SAY goodbye to six stuffy markets built in the 1970s, and welcome a brand-new one and five upgraded ones in the new year.

The markets, which are scheduled to open by the middle of next month, boast better **ventilation**, cleaner toilets and larger seating capacities in their food centres.



SAFER: An impression of Ang Mo Kio 628 Market, which was rebuilt with fire-safety features. (ARTIST'S IMPRESSION: NATIONAL ENVIRONMENT AGENCY)

The Kebun Baru Market and Food Centre, for one thing, can seat 30 per cent more people and its **passageways** have been widened.

Patrons can also look forward to new roofs over their heads, new tiles on the walls and floors and more disabled-friendly features.

One of the markets, the Ang Mo Kio 628 Market, had to be rebuilt, after it was gutted by a fire almost two years ago. Now, like the other markets, it has new fire-safety features.

It and the Tanglin Halt Food Centre now have **canopies** installed around their perimeters to give patrons better protection against stormy weather.

The three markets, as well as Beo Crescent Market, Kukoh 21 Food Centre and 11 Telok Blangah Crescent Market & Food Centre, have been upgraded under the National Environment Agency's (NEA) Hawker Centres Upgrading Programme.

About four in five of the NEA's 109 markets and food centres have gone through facelifts since the project started eight years ago. The NEA hopes to get all eligible centres upgraded by 2012.

The renovations for this latest batch took six months to more than a year, and cost \$1.7 million to \$9.35 million.

Stallholders will resume business progressively, depending on the progress of renovation of their stalls.

The NEA said yesterday: "The upgraded centres will have an improved **facade** as well as better facilities to meet patrons' dining and marketing needs. The upgraded facilities also allow stallholders to maintain better hygiene standards and house-keeping."

Ang Mo Kio resident Andy Khoo welcomed the cleaned-up dining spots.

The 44-year-old civil servant said: "I love hawker centres as there is a wide variety of food at reasonable prices, but my kids, who are accustomed to

foodcourts, are reluctant to go there as they find them greasy and dirty.

"I hope the renovations will change their views on hawker centres."

HELPDESK 我的字典

Ventilation: 通风设备
tōng fēng shè bèi

Passageways: 走廊 zǒu láng

Canopies: 顶盖 dǐng gài

Facade: 正面 zhèng miàn

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