

## Popular nasi padang eatery in Kampong Gelam apologises for sudden notice of closure

Rhea Yasmine

A popular nasi padang eatery in Kampong Gelam has apologised for the sudden announcement of its impending closure, saying in a social media post that it was “an incredibly difficult decision”.

In a Facebook post on Jan 21, Warong Nasi Pariaman thanked its customers for their “unwavering support and patronage over the years”.

“We apologise for the sudden announcement and kindly seek your understanding, as this has been an incredibly difficult decision for us,” it said.

The restaurant added that it would not be accepting reservations, with food served on a first come, first served basis.

The Straits Times contacted the restaurant on Jan 20, after it posted on social media that it would close permanently on Jan 31, but did not receive a response.

One of the owners, Mr Abdul Munaf Isrin, declined to reveal the reason behind the closure when interviewed by Berita Harian on Jan 20.

In a separate Facebook post on Jan 21, Acting Minister-in-charge of Muslim Affairs Faishal Ibrahim said he visited the family behind the restaurant on Jan 20.

He added that he has asked “colleagues across different government agencies to connect with the owners to understand what may be helpful as they plan their next steps”.

Associate Professor Faishal said many Singaporeans have come forward to share memories of Pariaman and expressed hope that the restaurant could continue.

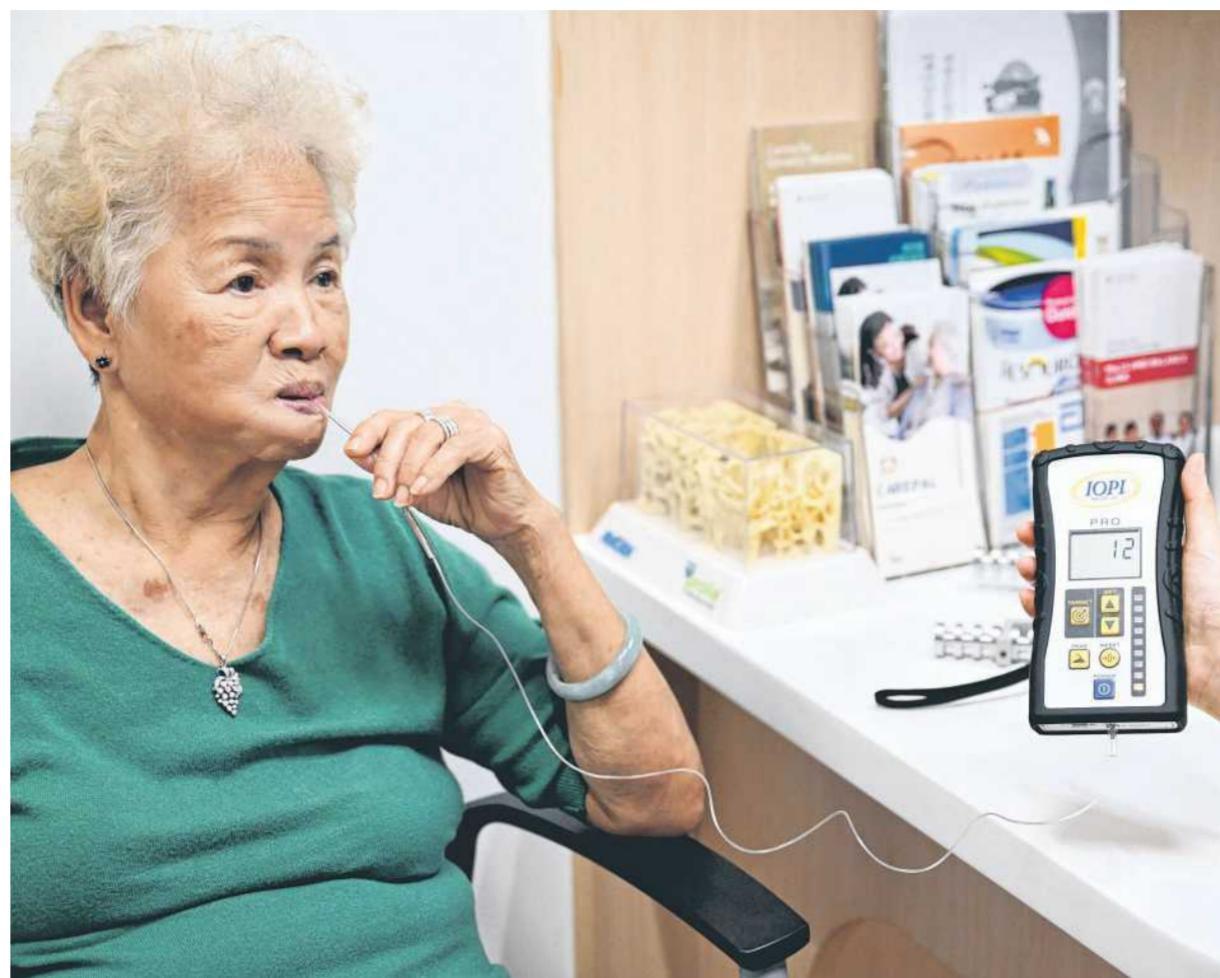
“The value of shops like Pariaman is truly immeasurable in our society,” he said.

“I shared with the family that I hope they know that they are deeply appreciated, and that their food has been part of many Singaporeans’ shared meals and memories over the years.”

ST has contacted Prof Faishal for more details. CNA had earlier reported on rental hikes in the Kampong Gelam area, with some jumping from around \$3,000 to almost \$10,000 over the past few years.

The eatery, located in a shophouse at 738 North Bridge Road near Sultan Mosque, has been operating since 1948 and has been passed down through generations.

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Madam Tan Ah Sang measuring her tongue and lip strength with an oral performance instrument at Tan Tock Seng Hospital. Oral frailty serves as an early predictor of malnutrition risk, sarcopenia and physical frailty. ST PHOTO: NG SOR LUAN

## New clinic at TTSH aims to detect and treat muscle loss disease early

Sarcopenia set to rise with ageing populace; prompt treatment can reverse the condition

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Madam Tan Ah Sang, 82, who has multiple health conditions including Parkinson’s disease and diabetes, was referred to the new clinic for muscle health at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) in 2025.

During her visits there, her geriatrician, Dr Daphne Yang, discovered that she has not only loss of muscle mass and strength, known as sarcopenia, but also osteoporosis, in addition to poor balance and vision issues.

As sarcopenia is associated with other risks, she was also screened and diagnosed with oral frailty, which is a decline in oral functions such as chewing, swallowing and speaking.

Marked by signs such as a reduced tooth count, difficulty chewing or swallowing, oral frailty serves as an early predictor of malnutrition risk, sarcopenia and physical frailty in ageing populations.

Consequently, Madam Tan was enrolled in an oral frailty programme, which saw her performing oral exercises with the help of a speech therapist to treat her swallowing issues.

Furthermore, she saw a dietitian, as she was malnourished and has inadequate protein intake, and also attended a one-to-one physiotherapy session before being referred to a day rehabilitation centre in the community, among other interventions.

Dr Yang started her on osteoporosis medications to help her meet her goal of being independent, and said her muscle mass and strength had improved at the recent three-month review.

Sarcopenia, the age-related progressive loss of muscle mass and strength, increases the risk of falls, fractures, complications after surgery, and disability.

Everyone experiences loss of muscle mass and strength as they age, but those with sarcopenia are losing it to the point where their physical function is impacted, said Dr Yang. Sarcopenia was recognised as a muscle disease in 2016.

In Singapore, sarcopenia affects a significant portion of community-dwelling older adults, with local epidemiological studies – the Geri-

Labs 2 study and the Yishun Study – indicating a prevalence of around 27 per cent to 32.2 per cent.

The disease is set to rise with an ageing population, but it is not usually diagnosed in the hospitals unless it is being evaluated in the context of frailty, though early diagnosis and treatment can reverse the condition, said Dr Yang.

Seeing the gap, Dr Yang, who has been a consultant at TTSH for five years now, started the Muster (Muscle Health for Staying Active and Robust) Clinic, where Madam Tan is a patient, in July 2025.

Led by four geriatricians currently, the clinic is a new effort to tackle the rising problem of sarcopenia among older adults with complex medical and functional needs.

Dr Yang, the clinical lead of the Muster Clinic, said sarcopenia is mostly diagnosed in research settings, where there is access to the equipment for measuring muscle mass and strength. However, screening tools are available in the community. At the clinic, they screen for it using a body composition scan and hand grip strength.

To date, 70 seniors aged 65 and above have been screened and diagnosed with sarcopenia, though some have concurrent conditions such as osteoporosis or obesity that will require modifications of the treatment plan to suit their medical conditions.

Another patient at the clinic, Mr Robin Ng, 82, had fallen four times between 2024 and 2025.

After a fall at Toa Payoh bus interchange in September, he was admitted to TTSH and referred to the sarcopenia clinic to screen for the disease.

However, he had a heart attack after his discharge from TTSH and could go to the clinic only in November, by which time his physical function had deteriorated.

He started individual geriatric physiotherapy sessions, which focus on resistance exercise to combat sarcopenia.

“The therapist also taught me to walk with my legs spread slightly wider apart, instead of placing them close together, for better balance. My walking stick should not be placed too close to my feet, in case I were to kick it and fall,” Mr Ng said.

A dietitian advised him on eating better, as the mainstay of the management of sarcopenia involves not just exercise but also nutrition, specifically progressive strength training and a diet with adequate protein intake.

For instance, the seniors could be advised to include a protein source in every meal, instead of taking a lot at one time because there is a limit to the amount of protein that can be used for muscle, with the rest becoming extra calories, said Dr Yang.

Before the set-up of the Muster Clinic, patients like Madam Tan and Mr Ng would have been referred to the Falls & Balance Clinic at TTSH after a hospital admission because of their recurrent falls.

Muscle health is a growing focus here. On the research front, Singapore launched one of the world’s first national sarcopenia consortiums, Magnet (Mechanistic Investigation and Clinical Innovation for Sarcopenia Diagnosis and Therapy), in August 2025 to enhance and coordinate national efforts in combating the condition.

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## 70 travellers caught for evading taxes, duties in week-long operation

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Seventy people were caught for failing to declare and pay taxes for goods at Singapore’s checkpoints during a week-long multi-agency enforcement operation, the authorities said on Jan 22.

The operation – conducted by the Singapore Police Force, Immigration and Checkpoints Authority (ICA) and Singapore Customs – was to detect and enforce against non-compliance with Singapore’s cross-border cash reporting regime and other illegal cross-border activities, the agencies said in a joint statement.

More than 10,000 travellers and 260 vehicles were identified for checks, and over 14,000 pieces of luggage and hand-carry bags were scanned or searched at Singapore’s land, air and sea checkpoints.

During the operation, \$3,398 in duties and goods and services tax was found to have been evaded for items such as cigarettes and tobacco products, liquor exceeding duty-free concession and goods ex-

ceeding GST import relief.

A total of \$21,990 in composition sums was imposed.

“The cases include a traveller carrying six sets of undeclared roller blinds, another with undeclared assorted luxury goods, and a third with undeclared smartwatches,” the agencies said, adding that all offences were compounded.

ICA also detected two travellers moving cash exceeding the permitted limit of \$20,000 into and out of Singapore without declaration, or having declared the amount inaccurately.

The first case involved a 46-year-old foreign woman who was found to have been carrying foreign currencies amounting to \$24,965 into Singapore without declaration on Jan 13. She was issued a notice of warning.

In the second case, a 49-year-old foreign man was caught attempting to move cash cheques amounting to \$91,789 out of Singapore without declaration on Jan 14. He was issued a composition sum of \$9,000.

“Singapore takes a serious view against cash smuggling and any related money laundering activities,

and will not hesitate to take stern enforcement actions against any individuals who commit these offences and persons who facilitate them,” the agencies said.

The authorities reminded travellers that it is a statutory requirement to declare if they are moving cash or bearer negotiable instruments – such as cheques or money orders – amounting to more than \$20,000 or its equivalent in foreign currency.

They added that travellers are responsible for accurate and complete declarations of dutiable and GST-payable items. Those who fraudulently evade Customs or excise duties may be fined up to 20 times the amount evaded, jailed for up to two years, or both.

Meanwhile, those who fail to report or accurately report the movement of cash or bearer negotiable instruments exceeding the permitted amount may be fined up to \$50,000, jailed for up to three years, or both.

A confiscation order may also be issued for any part of the cash related to the offence.

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