



* First 'Shop to Win' weekly draw winner

The winner of the first 'Shop to Win' weekly draw, Ms Teo Siew Mui (left), receiving a S\$10,000 cheque from Mr Bernard Chia, merchandising and marketing director of Giant, and Ms Caroline Bone, marketing manager of MediaCorp Press, yesterday. A regular participant of TODAY's 'Shop to Win' contests, Ms Teo said she spent about S\$260 on groceries and household items at Giant this time around. **PHOTO BY KOH MUI FONG**

Doctor, patients charged with illegally selling cough mixture

SINGAPORE – A doctor and three of his patients were yesterday charged with illegally selling cough mixture containing codeine.

Dr Ho Thong Chew, 41, a registered doctor of Focus Medical Group in Ang Mo Kio Avenue 1, was charged with 35 counts of contravening the Medicines Act.

He allegedly sold 846 canisters of the codeine-laced cough syrup to three patients without a wholesale dealer's licence over five months from January last year.

Each canister contained 3.8 litres of the mixture.

Dr Ho's case will be heard again on June 11.

The other three accused — Yap Beng Keong, 37, Ng Yong Yi, 30, and Ng Jin Jie, 28 — are alleged to have bought the cough mixture from Dr Ho and sold the mixture in Geylang and Yishun.

Ng Jin Jie, who faced 11 counts, pleaded guilty yesterday.

Yap's case will be mentioned again on June 11. He faces nine charges.

Ng Yong Yi, who faces 14 charges, will appear in court again on June 1.

It is illegal to sell medicinal products without a wholesale dealer's licence. Offenders can be jailed up to two years and fined a maximum of S\$5,000. **ALVINA SOH**

NTUC Foodfare extends S\$1.99 meals

SINGAPORE – NTUC Foodfare is extending its S\$1.99 meals to more heartlanders as part of its Rice Garden social project to provide affordable local fare.

It has opened its second stall, Warong Rice Garden, at a coffeeshop in Lorong 7 Toa Payoh and plans to expand the Rice Garden network to more than 100 stalls in hawker centres by 2015.

NTUC Foodfare yesterday said its first stall in the Aljunied Hawker Centre has served 252,000 meals

since it opened three years ago and concession cardholders have collectively enjoyed S\$63,000 in savings.

Both stalls serve a selection of affordable meals at S\$2.50 to the public. They charge a concessionary rate of S\$1.99 for residents under the Public Assistance Scheme and also for concessionary cardholders, who comprise senior citizens, students, full-time national servicemen and NTUC union members.

CHANNEL NEWSASIA

CHILDCARE CENTRES

Low take-up of schemes to improve productivity

Only 164 of 981 centres in the Republic are making use of grants from the Govt

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SINGAPORE – The manpower crunch is putting a squeeze on plans to build more childcare centres and yet productivity improvement schemes that can be tapped on to ease the shortage are not seeing much take-up by childcare operators.

Only 164 of the 981 childcare centres in Singapore are making use of such grants from the Government, some of which have been around for about four years.

Hence, the Ministry of Community Development, Youth and Sports (MCYS), which is planning to build 200 new centres by 2018, is developing a Productivity Enhancement Plan to address rising operational costs and raise productivity by using information and communication technology.

At a visit to Modern Montessori Preschool to view the new Vitals and Attendance Monitoring System (VAMS) yesterday, Minister of State (Community Development, Youth and Sports) Halimah Yacob said the low take-up rate for the schemes could be due to "lack of awareness".

Also, it is the bigger operators that are making use of grants, as small-

er operators are usually "busy and caught up with operational work", she said.

Ms Jane Choy, the chief operating officer of Our Juniors' Schoolhouse — which has thrice received the MCYS Innovation Grant — pointed out: "It takes time to refine ideas and even more to write the proposals."

Another childcare operator said her centre was busy trying to fulfil the Singapore Pre-school Accreditation Framework, a quality-assurance scheme for pre-schools. Perhaps the ministry was "throwing too much at them", said the operator, who did not want to be named.

Mdm Halimah said: "We cannot just look at ways to increase manpower but at ways on how to improve productivity and innovation, so that we can ensure quality and standards continue to increase."

She pointed out that innovations like VAMS can cut down teachers' routine duties, giving them more time for qualitative work. The system, already piloted in 13 schools, can take attendance and record a child's temperature, height and weight, cutting down on time and paperwork. It only takes one staff member to operate.

The MCYS and the Infocomm Development Authority are also exploring a new "Software as a Service" programme, where centres can use cloud-computing applications to meet productivity needs. More details will be announced later this year.

● Schemes for childcare operators include the MCYS Innovation Grant, which subsidises up to 95 per cent or S\$4,000 a centre for innovative projects, and iSPRINT by the Infocomm Development Authority, which sponsors up to 70 per cent.

Hougang case: AGC applies to strike out summons

SINGAPORE – The Attorney-General's Chambers (AGC) applied yesterday to strike out the summons for a hearing on the time-frame within which the Prime Minister has to call a by-election in the previously vacant Hougang Single-Member Constituency.

In a press release yesterday, the AGC said its application is based on the grounds that the summons for the judicial review is "frivolous or vexatious and/or an abuse of the process of the court".

It added: "Given the calling of the by-election on May 9, and the by-election on May 26, the AGC maintains the view that the entire substratum of the proceedings has gone and it would be an abuse of the process of court for the plaintiff to continue the proceedings."

The case came about after part-time cleaner Vellama Marie Muthu, a Hougang resident, sought the High

Court to declare that the Prime Minister does not have "unfettered discretion" in whether and when to call a by-election in Hougang, after the constituency had become vacant when former MP Yaw Shin Leong was sacked from the Workers' Party (WP).

Mdm Vellama had also sought the High Court to issue a Mandatory Order against the Prime Minister directing him to advise the President to call an election in Hougang within three months or a "reasonable time as the court deems fit".

Mr Yaw was sacked on Feb 15 and the Writ of Election was issued on May 9.

On Polling Day last Saturday, WP candidate Png Eng Huat won 62.09 per cent of the votes.

The hearing dates for the AGC's application have not been set.

TEO XUANWEI

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