



Workers shopping in a dormitory minimart in Seletar Farmway. The Ministry of Manpower has encouraged major dorm operators to provide more recreational activities this weekend; and with workers choosing to stay in, coffee shops and minimarts located within dorms expect a boom in business.

ST PHOTO: MUGILAN RAJASEGERAN

Data shows worker woes 'not an issue'

ACTING Manpower Minister Tan Chuan-jin yesterday released figures in response to a view that poor treatment of foreign workers by errant employers could have fed unhappiness among these workers, and contributed to Sunday's Little India riot.

There have been 3,700 employment-related complaints this year, as compared to the 1.1 million foreign workers here on work permits and S-passes, he said.

"That's a very small percentage of the workforce that have disputes and many of these disputes are settled within a month," Mr Tan said in an interview with local media.

He also cited the findings of a 2011 survey of foreign workers by the Manpower Ministry, which found that nine in 10 were relatively content with their life here, and seven in 10 would recommend Singapore to their friends and family looking to work abroad.

On the causes of Sunday's

riot, Mr Tan said: "I know that there's a narrative out there that there are perhaps deeper, underlying social concerns and struggles. But let's look at the data and what it actually reflects."

Mr Tan also said the Government has been doing extensive outreach to the foreign worker community since Sunday, and gathering feedback from different sources.

"The reaction has been quite consistent - many of them denounce the actions, many of them are quite horrified by what happened, and this is not an action that represents the community," he said.

On employment-related complaints, he said: "Our perspective is that yes, there are issues, we have made changes to the Employment of Foreign Manpower Act, stepped up enforcement... we will continue to make sure that we watch that space, make sure workers are looked after, cared for properly."