The scourge of racial prejudice in Singapore

Like most Singaporeans, I am concerned by several recent incidents of racism. In May, an Indian woman was confronted by a Chinese man for not wearing her face mask properly while brick-walking. The man abused her verbally, using a racial slur, and threatened to hit her.

In the most recent incident, a Chinese man confronted a mixed-race couple in Orchard Road, telling them that it was a disgrace for a Chinese girl and an Indian man to be together.

I have three concerns. First, I am concerned that such incidents seem to be on the increase. Second, I am concerned by the appearance of Chinese chauvinism. Third, I am concerned that members of our Indian community seem to be the target of these recent attacks.

There are legal safeguards but we must mobilise the weight of public opinion against prejudicial views about minorities.

Tommy Koh

For The Straits Times

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An evening crowd outside Clementi Mall in February. The rise of China in the world has naturally engendered pride in many Chinese Singaporeans. There is nothing wrong with this, says the writer. However, pride in China's achievements should not be allowed to cause the Chinese in Singapore to become chauvinistic - meaning to feel superior to the other races. 37 PHOTO: KEVIN CHING