Move to increase number of lawyers:

Singapore gets 2nd law school

THE second law school will be set up at the Singapore Management University next year. It is expected to produce 90 graduates a year.

It is one of several suggestions that have been submitted to and accepted by the Government from the Third Committee on the Supply of Lawyers. The committee, chaired by Chief Justice Chan Sek Keong, conducts regular reviews to increase the supply of practicing lawyers here.

Other recommendations include increasing the National University of Singapore’s Law Faculty intake to a maximum of 250 students every year from next year. The current intake is 220 students. The committee has also proposed allowing graduates with Second Class Lower Division Honours degrees from approved foreign universities to practise law in Singapore, if they fulfil requirements like having three years of relevant work experience. Currently they can work as in-house counsels, paralegals or practise only foreign law.

The Government has also appointed Justice V K Rajah to chair a new committee to review the entire legal services sector in Singapore.

The nine-member team will study areas like improving Singapore’s legal education and how to promote the country as a key provider of legal services in Asia.

By next year, local firms would also be allowed to hire foreign lawyers, under stringent conditions, to practise Singapore law in prescribed areas like banking and finance. These conditions include having excellent academic qualifications and not practising Singapore law in the first year.