

'Only court can punish criminals'

By Our Reporter

SHILLONG: Legal experts have said that law-enforcing agencies cannot punish a person for allegedly committing crimes and that only the court of law can award punishment to anyone found guilty of criminal activities.

Taking part in the two-day workshop on 'Custodial Torture and Impunity' at the El Swer School, Laban here, Manabadhi Kar Suraksha Mancha (MASUM) president Kirity Roy said the Indian Constitution clearly stated that none of us could punish a person for committing crimes but the court could do so.

Mr Roy said this while re-

ferring to atrocities and highhandedness by police while making arrest of any person for alleged criminal activities.

"Under no circumstances police can punish a person without the court's order. Several persons allegedly involved in crimes were badly treated by police, whether in lock-up or prison, and this is not permissible as per the law," Mr Roy said.

The legal expert said most of the persons faced severe problem while in police custody due to highhandedness by police or law-keepers.

In reality, police or any law-keeper cannot punish any alleged criminal, **(Contd on P-5)**

Only court can..

(Contd from P-1) as it is very illegal, he said.

Expressing concern over political interference in the justice delivery system, advocate from Nagaon Bar Association, Assam Dhurubajyoti Sarma said the judiciary should be separated from the executive.

"The northeastern states, including Meghalaya, should separate the judiciary from the executive to enable the judiciary to provide fair justice," Mr Sarma added.

Representatives of NGOs, law students and other advocates, who attended the workshop, also said there was an urgent need for separation of the judiciary from the executive.

The workshop, organised by Meghalaya Human Rights Organisation (MHRO), was inaugurated by Deputy Speaker of the State Assembly Sanbor Shullai.