

**Gangtok, May 17: (IPR)** Chairman, National Commission for Safai Karmacharis, Government of India, Shri Manhar Valjibhai Zala addressed a press conference this afternoon to share the outcome of his meetings with State Chief Secretary, DGP, Heads of Departments, State Government functionaries. Counsellors of Gangtok Municipal Corporation and Nagar Panchayats, and Safai Karmacharis from all the four District headquarters.

The Chairman expressed happiness at Sikkim being the only state in India where Safai Karmacharis are living with great respect and dignity and recorded his appreciation for the noble initiative of referring to Safai Karmacharis under Gangtok Municipal Corporation as “Gangtok Beautifiers”.

The Chairman informed the media persons about the discussions and suggestion put forth by the Commission regarding issues relating to Safai Karmacharis and Manual Scavengers for the State of Sikkim and their Rehabilitation Act 2013. He also briefed about the various issues related to Safai Karmacharis which were discussed, their grievances and demands, health insurance, education facilities, housing/accommodation schemes, loans, salary/pension, recruitment, orientation, medical camps etc for the welfare of the Safai Karmacharis.

He also informed that a recommendation for forming a State Commission for Safai Karmacharis has been submitted to the government of Sikkim. This, he added will aid in the social-economic development of the safai karmacharis.

He said that all the meetings chaired by him during his visit came out fruitful, and expressed his satisfaction to see the standard maintained for the Safai Karmacharis within the State.

He urged every individual to be more aware about the Schemes, facilities and initiatives taken by the Central and State Government.

Earlier, Chief Secretary, Government of Sikkim, Shri A.K. Shrivastava while addressing the meeting chaired by the Chairman National Safaikarmachari Board, GOI, stated that Sikkim is perhaps the only State where manual scavenging is not practiced, and safai karmacharis live with dignity and respect and enjoy adequate facilities provided by the Government. He added that there has not been a single death of safai karmachari while cleaning potholes or sewerage.

The Chairman was accompanied in the meeting by Secretary, National Commission for Safai Karmacharis, Government of India, Shri Narayan Das, and Principal Private Secretary to the Chairman Shri Mahenk Prasad.

