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Islamabad

Recognising the imperative need for dialogue among different faiths and religions to enhance mutual understanding, harmony and cooperation among people, Universal Interfaith Peace Mission (UIPM) will organise week-long programmes to celebrate World Interfaith Harmony Week (WIHW) 2017.

Announcing the programme schedule of the WIHW, UIPM Chairman Dr AGR Chishti in a press conference at Islamabad Hotel on Saturday, said that this year UIPM, Common Word Movement Pakistan, URICC Karachi which is constituent of URICC Islamabad has decided to celebrate World Interfaith Harmony Week in a coherent manner and this press conference is part of this schedule.

He said that from January 15 till January 28, UIPM, delegation met different religious, political and diplomatic personalities all across the country to spread the message of WIHW. “In today’s press conference I will be unveiling the next phase of the celebration programme. Although the World Interfaith Harmony Week has been announced by the UN, but King Abdullah II of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is the official sponsor of the World Interfaith Harmony Week prizes. We will like to invite organisations from all across Pakistan to participate in the event and in this regard if they need any kind of help they can contact UIPM headquarters in New Sohan, Islamabad,” he added.

In the second phase of the WIHW celebrations, he said UIPM will arrange television programmes, and organise ‘WIHW Welcome Conference’ on January 31 at Islamabad Hotel. The conference will be attended by government officials as well dignitaries from diplomatic circles. Ambassador Delegation of European Union to Pakistan Jean Francois Kautain will be the chief guest of the conference. Religious scholars from different faiths in their speeches will also shed light on interfaith harmony.

On February 1, UIPM delegation comprising members of different faiths will visit Balmik Hindu Temple, Lalkurti for a breakfast. On February 2, the delegation will visit Gurdwara Punja Sahib, Hassanabdal. On February 3, a sermon will be delivered at Jamia Masjid Mai Saleem Akhtar, New Sohan, Islamabad. On February 04, the UIPM delegation will visit Buddhist Temple and Baha’i faith’s local assembly. While on February 5, a visit of Pur Fazl Kaleesa has been scheduled. On February 6, UIPM delegation will visit different schools and colleges where videos and speeches of different leaders from Islamic world on interfaith harmony will be screened. On February 7 an Interfaith Prayer Meeting will be held at Jamia Masjid Mai Saleem Akhtar, New Sohan, Islamabad.

In the next phase, from February 8 till February 28 different programmes on interfaith harmony will be arranged all across Pakistan which will be attended by UIPM delegation. While on February 28, UIPM will organise Interfaith Mela in Islamabad.

Dr AGR Chishti said that in these programmes the true essence of WIHW which was drafted by Prince Dr Ghazi bin Mohammad of Jordan and presented at the UN by King Abdullah II of Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan will be highlighted in true letter and spirit. It encompasses the message for the people around the world and wants to tell them that when pointless bloodshed in the name of religion is originating hysteria around the globe, it necessitates making intensive hard work to bring together faiths and cultures on a platform and for that goal interfaith harmony is the best possible solution.

He said that it is need of the hour that declaration of excommunication and blame of infidelity among rival religious groups should be declared null and void. The World Interfaith Harmony Week is based on the pioneering work of the Common Word initiative which calls upon religious leaders to engage in a dialogue based on two common fundamental religious Commandments; Love of God, and Love of the Neighbour, without nevertheless compromising any of their own religious tenets.