

Our Correspondent

### **Diplomats concerned over Azadi March**

ISLAMABAD: The diplomatic community present in the federal capital is concerned and confused regarding the upcoming Azadi March of Maulana Fazlur Rehman's JUI that is reaching here on Thursday.

Their apprehension persists despite government has concluded an agreement with marchers including seeking an assurance for not entering "Red-Zone" where diplomatic missions and most of the diplomats' residences are situated.

The diplomatic missions are constantly in touch with the Foreign Office and seeking its guidance pertaining to the developing scenario.

Well placed diplomatic sources told The News here Sunday evening that the diplomatic corps is keen to ascertain fallout of fresh efforts against the incumbent government by the opposition. The government rarely takes them into confidence about the developments taking place on the domestic scene. The diplomats are of the view that the Foreign Office is strangely following "inwards" looking approach while interacting with the foreign missions. For the reason they are compelled to bank upon the informal sources of information for making their assessment.

The political wings of the missions are keeping their capitals posted about the situation and sending dispatches about the backgrounder and possible outcome of the agitation like march. They are reminding in the dispatches that way back in 2014, march that came from Lahore was supposed to stay away from the sensitive areas of the capital like "Red-Zone" but the protesters ultimately not only entered the area but also caused a lot of difficulties for the diplomatic community living in Islamabad.

The senior officials are busy in reminding the diplomats that Maulana Fazlur Rehman's march is quite different from one that was staged five years ago. They opined that the Maulana lacks support of the major stakeholders of the system and it wouldn't be possible for him to stay longer period and penetrate into the certain areas. The sources said that leaders of the JUI-F had already briefed the diplomatic community about their plan and had assured them that they wouldn't be troubled in any manner during the march.

The diplomats are waiting the march reaching the federal capital with their fingers crossed. They have explained to their respective capitals that political stability has become question mark in this country and the situation couldn't be greatly helpful for transacting business here.