

Monitoring Desk

### **PM aide on finance chastised over price hike ignorance**

KARACHI: On a day when Adviser to the Prime Minister on Finance Dr Hafeez Shaikh rejected consumers' concerns regarding ongoing food inflation as 'lies', greengrocers cited tomato prices in the metropolis hovering between Rs250-300 per kg on Monday.

The president of the Falahi Anjuman Wholesale Vegetable Market New Sabzi Mandi, Haji Shahjehan, expressed shock over the adviser's claim and said that tomatoes in Karachi were being sold for Rs250-300 per kg depending on the quality and the area after hitting the record peak of Rs320 per kg from Rs160 in a single day on Saturday.

Earlier, Mr Shaikh had told a group of reporters that tomatoes were being sold as low as Rs17 per kg in Karachi's vegetable markets.

"In Karachi, in the sabzi mandi (produce market), tomatoes are being sold for Rs17 per kilogram," he said. When some of the reporters told him that tomatoes were, in fact, being sold at Rs240 per kg, he rejected their comments, saying people were lying.

On Saturday, the city government had quoted consumer price of Rs199 per kg for tomato which was Rs147 on Friday. However, neither the tomato nor any other such items were available at official rates in the city.

Shortly after the adviser's remarks were reported, consumers took to social media to call out his ignorance.

"And this is today's wholesale Price list for vegetables in Lahore. The disconnect of our ruling elite is huge," a consumer tweeted with a picture of the vegetable rate that recorded tomato price between Rs155-165 per kg.

"Yesterday I bought 5kg tomatoes from Sabzi Mandi I-11 for Rs.1200 which is Rs.240/kg. While according to Hafeez sheikh tomatoes are being sold for Rs.17/kg ! Sir either show me that Mandi or the drug u r on," another consumer tweeted.