

Our Correspondent

### **Street vendors are not encroachments, says commissioner**

Commissioner Karachi Iftikhar Shallwani believes that street vendors are not encroachments and the law permits them to carry out the business with formal permission.

He was speaking as the chief guest at a seminar on the street vendor project organised by Islamabad-based research institute, the Policy Research Institute of Market Economy (Prime), in collaboration with Friedrich Naumann Foundation, National Youth Assembly and lawyer Ahmed Bashir at a local hotel in Karachi.

The seminar was attended by economists, scholars, representatives of non-governmental organisations and members of the working group formed by the Prime to get feedback from stakeholders on preparing a draft legislative bill to protect the rights of street vendors and articulate public space usage.

The government, according to the commissioner, had no intention to place ban on street vendors as it believed that they provide low-income families to earn a livelihood and they contribute to the economy, however, street vendors should be regulated and registered.

He said various countries allow vendors to do business, but they were regulated and measures were taken against unregulated ones only.

“They are bound to display the issued registration number on their carts,” he said and assured his full support to the Prime institute and organisations involved in this project.

He emphasised that it was the responsibility of public-private partnership and the civil society to organise, strengthen and regulate the rights of vendors. However, he said, it cannot be said that there were no laws available.

“Laws are available, and the need of the hour is to regulate the rights of street vendors,” he said. Research Associate PRIME Beenish Javed highlighted the rationale and objectives of the meeting. She also shed light on the economic significance of the vending community and the challenges faced by them. Bashir presented the draft legislative bill on urban street vendors which focused on regulating and protecting the rights of the vendors.