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GALLUP PAKISTAN POLL FINDINGS ON

CONTROL OF INFLATION IS PUBLIC'S TOP PRIORITY

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*GALLUP POLL ON FORTHCOMING BUDGET
CONTROL OF INFLATION IS PUBLIC'S TOP PRIORITY*

According to a Gallup poll conducted on the subject of forth-coming national budget, 32% of the urban population gave highest priority to the control of inflation. Surprisingly only 9% proposed salary raises and 8% were directly concerned about increases in taxes.

The survey was conducted by Gallup Pakistan in the leading cities of all four provinces including the federal and provincial capitals. The respondents were selected through a scientific procedure which ensured that all regional, income, education and age groups were represented. They were asked to give their proposals for the forthcoming budget. The computerized data of the survey shows a wide range of proposals ranging from technical answers such as balanced budget and control on the supply of money to issues of more immediate concerns such as raises in pension payments, control on the price of wheat, residential plots for the poor etc. However the vast majority was worried about any possible impact of the budget on inflation. 32% of the urban population said their principal proposal for the forthcoming budget was that it should not lead to increase in prices. The middle income group was especially emphatic on this point. 38% of them mentioned inflation as an issue. The second most popular proposal in the public opinion survey was that the budget should be for the benefit of the common man. Some respondents articulated this view by saying: it should not be the capitalists budget. The third ranking proposal offered by 9% concerned raises in salaries. Naturally this proposal was more popular with the more educated and salaried population. 9% proposed a reduction in taxes. 4% suggested that the forthcoming budget should put special emphasis on educational facilities. 2% favored reduction in the price of petrol.

It would be interesting to note that a Gallup poll conducted shortly after last years budget had shown favourable public response. 30% of an urban sample had regarded last years budget as an improvement over the past, and had identified salary raises and absence of new taxes as its favourable aspects, whereas increases in railways fares was particularly pointed out as its disliked aspect. Last years budget speech was the first from the elected government and was watched on the TV in nearly one quarter of the urban households. It was listened on the radio by 5% and read in the newspapers by 15% of the respondents according to a Gallup poll conducted at that time.