1155 - Time for Imsaak (Starting the Fast) when the Calendar Times are Different

the question

There are apparent discrepancies in the times of Salaat-ul Fajr stated on the different timetables distributed by the various mosques of the same town or city. Would it be a ‘safer’ practice if one was to follow the earliest of those times for the purpose of Imsaak (abstaining from eating, drinking, etc.)?

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

It is permissible to eat, drink, etc. until one is certain of the time of Fajr (interpretation of the meaning): “…eat and drink until the time where the ‘white’ and ‘black’ thresholds of Al-Fajr is evident to you…” [Soorat-ul Baqarah]

So, this means it is permissible to continue eating and drinking unless it is evident for one that it is time for Fajr. Fajr can be defined as the ‘white’ light spreading across the horizon from the eastern side. If one was unable to sight Al-Fajr and there was no one else who could tell him about it through means such as raising the Azaan (The call to prayers), then one should follow the timetable that, according to the best of his knowledge, is the most accurate. This accuracy is usually established through experience or by asking experts or the earlier Muslim residents of the area.