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## MENU

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## Topics Covered



- What is the news?
- Then what is a “Halwa ceremony”? Why is it so important?
- What does “Halwa ceremony” mean?
- What makes it so important?
- In what way does the “halwa ceremony” matter?
- Halwa Ceremony Is Attended By?
- Historical Background of Halwa Ceremony:
- QuizTime:
- Are you Ready!
- Read the Below Instructions Carefully:
  - Please Rate!
- Mains Questions:
  - Question 1:
  - Model Answer:
  - Question 2:
  - Model Answer:
  - Relevance to the UPSC Prelims and Mains syllabus under the following topics:

## *What is the news?*

- The traditional “Halwa Ceremony” takes place in the North Block before the Budget is presented. The Finance Minister and other government officials involved in making the Budget are there to watch and participate. The event marks the beginning of printing Budget documents.
- The Halwa ceremony, which marked the start of putting together papers for the Interim Budget 2024, took place in North Block. Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and MoS Finance Bhagwat Kisanrao Karad were there.

## ***Then what is a “Halwa ceremony”? Why is it so important?***

- Making a budget is a long process. The final draft of the budget paper is made after several months of planning, consulting, and putting together. The first steps in the process are taken in August or September of the previous year, almost six months before the financial statement is given to Parliament.
- The traditional “Halwa ceremony” takes place in the North Block before the Budget is presented. The Finance Minister and other government officials involved in making the Budget are there, as well. The event marks the beginning of printing Budget documents.

## *What does “Halwa ceremony” mean?*

- **“Halwa ceremonies” are held every year by the Finance Ministry about 9 to 10 days before the Union Budget is given in Parliament.** This is a tradition. The event is the start of the printing process for the Union Budget. The ceremony takes place in the Central Delhi basement of the Finance Ministry (North Block), which has a printing press just for this purpose.
- The popular Indian sweet dish is made in a huge kadhai and served to the staff at the Finance Ministry. When the Finance Minister gives the order, he stirs the kadhai and serves the sweet to the officials. It’s also a way to show appreciation for all the work that went into making the Union Budget.

## *What makes it so important?*

- The ceremony is important because it starts the “lock-in” for ministry staff to stop leaks, which will last until the financial statement is presented. The basement of the North Block is turned into a prison to keep things secret and stop any leaks. About 9 to 10 days, people from the finance ministry and other departments that have a direct hand in making or writing the budget are locked up and can’t talk to anyone else. In case of an emergency, the officials’ families can leave a message on a certain number, but they are not allowed to talk to the officials directly.

***Staff won't be able to leave the North Block until February 1, when the Finance Minister presents the budget to the Lok Sabha.***

## ***Why?***

- The reason for these strict rules is a leak that happened in 1950. An unfinished part of the 1950 Union Budget was leaked while it was being printed at Rashtrapati Bhawan. Because of the leak, John Matthai, who was finance minister at the time, had to step down. A fixed place for budget printing has been set up in the basement of North Block since 1980.

## ***In what way does the “halwa ceremony” matter?***

- The people who are working on the budget have to stay in the North Block until the budget is given to Parliament. This includes the people who made the budget and the people who helped make it. Without a doubt, the “lock-in” phase of the Budget has begun.  
This is done to make sure that information about the budget stays secret and doesn't get out before the public presentation.



## *Halwa Ceremony Is Attended By?*

- High-level officials from the finance ministry, such as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and other important people who worked on the budget, attend the Halwa Ceremony. As the officials work hard to finish the last details of the budget, the event helps them feel like a strong team.

## *Historical Background of Halwa Ceremony:*

### *Historical Anecdotes and Intriguing Facts:*

- Origins of the Halwa: **Legend attributes the ceremony to Morarji Desai**, who started it in the 1960s. Some believe it was inspired by a similar practice in princely states, where sweets were exchanged during important decisions.



(Pic:theprint)

- **Sweet Variations:** While suji halwa is the current norm, earlier years saw experiments with different sweets like kesari bhath or even laddoos.
- **The “Lock-in” Tradition:** Initially, officials were literally locked in rooms with no phones or communication. Today, technology allows some limited access while maintaining secrecy through secure networks.

### ***Evolution of the Ceremony and Public Engagement:***

- **From Secrecy to Transparency:** In the past, the Halwa Ceremony was shrouded in secrecy. Today, live telecasts and social media interactions offer glimpses into the process, demystifying the budget for citizens.
- **Public Participation Initiatives:** Finance Ministers have reached out to the public through

pre-budget consultations and online suggestions, aiming to incorporate citizen aspirations into the budget document.

- **Challenges of Openness:** Balancing transparency with maintaining crucial confidentiality remains a challenge. Leaks or premature reveals can disrupt market stability and undermine the impact of the budget announcement.

### ***Challenges Faced by the Finance Ministry:***

- **Balancing Competing Priorities:** Catering to diverse needs of economic growth, social welfare, fiscal responsibility, and political pressures often leads to tightrope walking for the ministry.
- **Economic Uncertainties:** Global economic volatility, natural disasters, and unforeseen emergencies can throw off projections and necessitate last-minute adjustments, adding immense pressure on the budget-making process.
- **Political Will and Public Expectations:** Implementing tough measures or navigating contentious reforms despite potential public displeasure can be a major hurdle for the Finance Minister.

### ***Analyzing the Impact of the Budget on Society and Economy:***

- **Direct Impact:** The budget directly affects individuals through tax policies, subsidies, and social welfare programs, influencing their

- spending power and quality of life.
- **Indirect Impact:** Budgetary allocations on infrastructure, education, healthcare, and other sectors have long-term implications for economic growth, job creation, and overall societal development.
  - **Distributional Equity:** Analyzing how the budget benefits different income groups, vulnerable sections, and geographic regions is crucial to ensure inclusive and equitable economic growth.

### ***A Symbol of Secrecy and Solidarity:***

- Following the ceremony, the officials embark on a “lock-in” period, sequestered within the ministry premises with no connection to the outside world. This period of isolation ensures absolute secrecy around the budget details, preventing leaks and guaranteeing a surprise-filled presentation on D-Day. But the lock-in is also a testament to solidarity, as officials from diverse departments work tirelessly, bound by a single purpose – shaping India’s economic future.

### ***Beyond the Sugar-Coated Surface:***

- The Halwa Ceremony, however, transcends its literal meaning. It serves as a poignant reminder of the immense responsibility entrusted upon the Finance Ministry. The carefully stirred halwa symbolizes the meticulously balanced ingredients that come together to form the budget – taxation,

expenditure, fiscal prudence, and social welfare. Every scoop served represents the hopes and aspirations of millions, waiting to be addressed through thoughtful financial decisions.

### ***A Beacon of Transparency and Public Engagement:***

- In recent years, the ceremony has evolved from a closed-door affair to a more open event. Live telecasts and social media interactions offer a glimpse into the process, fostering public engagement and demystifying the budget-making machinery. This transparency reinforces the democratic fabric of our nation and allows citizens to feel more invested in the outcome.

### ***The Sweet Scent of Hope:***

- As the aroma of the halwa fades, it leaves behind a lingering sense of anticipation. The ceremony stands as a prelude to the grand narrative of the budget, promising hope for a better tomorrow. It reminds us that even amidst the intricate calculations and policy debates, the ultimate purpose of the budget is to serve the people, to sweeten their lives with the promise of a secure and prosperous nation.



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*Are you Ready!*

*Thank you, Time Out !*

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**General Studies**

CURRENT AFFAIRS QUIZ

***Read the Below Instructions Carefully:***

- Click on - Start Quiz
- Attempt all questions (You can attempt or leave)

- After Attempting Last Question.
  - Enter Name & Email
  - Click on - Check Result
  - Scroll down - Check out Solutions too.
- Thank you.

Loading ...



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Category: General Studies

***Which of the following is NOT mentioned as a challenge faced by the Finance Ministry in the budgeting process?***

- Balancing competing priorities like growth and social welfare
- Managing political pressures and public expectations
- Adapting to global economic uncertainties and emergencies
- Encouraging private sector participation in infrastructure development

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Category: Himachal General Knowledge

***Which statement best describes the evolution of the Halwa Ceremony?***

- A shift from public participation to exclusive secrecy
- An increase in political interference in the process
- A transition from obscurity to greater transparency
- A decrease in the ritual's symbolic significance

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Category: General Studies

***The editorial suggests that the Halwa Ceremony can be seen as a symbol of:***

- The dominance of economic experts in policymaking
- The disconnect between the government and the public
- The collective effort involved in shaping the budget
- The exclusive power enjoyed by the Finance Minister

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Category: General Studies

***The "lock-in" period during the Halwa Ceremony traditionally involved:***

- Sharing meals with the Finance Minister
- Engaging in public outreach activities
- Complete isolation from outside communication
- Holding press conferences and briefings

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Category: General Studies

***The Halwa Ceremony is primarily associated with which Indian ministry?***

- Ministry of Home Affairs
- Ministry of Finance
- Ministry of External Affairs
- Ministry of Health and Family Welfare



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*Check Rank, Result Now and enter correct email as you will get Solutions in the email as well for future use!*

Check the Result

Your score is

0%

Restart quiz

*Please Rate!*

Send feedback

## *Mains Questions:*

# Below Mains Question

Write in Comment Section



**Question 1:**

***“Beyond the sugary surface: Analyze the historical evolution and contemporary significance of the Halwa Ceremony in the context of India’s budgeting process.” (250 words)***

## ***Model Answer:***

- The Halwa Ceremony, though seemingly a simple tradition, holds deep historical and contemporary significance. Emerging from Morarji Desai’s era, it once symbolized a cloistered process, with “lock-ins” and secrecy. Today, it stands as a bridge between tradition and transparency, televised and engaging the public. This evolution reflects India’s journey towards a more participatory democracy, where citizens feel connected to the economic narrative.
- Historically, the ceremony served as a unifying ritual, binding diverse ministry officials towards a common goal. It also embodied secrecy, ensuring surprise during the Budget presentation. The “lock-in” period, although now less stringent, emphasizes the gravity of the task and reinforces the value of confidentiality.
- However, the contemporary Halwa Ceremony transcends its ritualistic roots. Televised broadcasts and social media interactions demystify the process, fostering public engagement and encouraging a sense of ownership. This transparency is crucial for a democratic nation, promoting trust and accountability in the

budgeting process.

- In conclusion, the Halwa Ceremony, both a relic of the past and a symbol of the present, holds immense value. It reminds us of the collective effort behind the Budget, while showcasing a more open and inclusive financial decision-making process. As India progresses, the ceremony will undoubtedly continue to evolve, reflecting the nation's aspirations for a truly participatory and responsible economic future.

### **Question 2:**

***“The Union Budget, as symbolized by the Halwa Ceremony, is a balancing act between competing priorities. Critically analyze the challenges faced by the Finance Ministry in ensuring equitable and sustainable economic development through the budgeting process.” (250 words)***

### **Model Answer:**

- The Union Budget, like the stirring of the halwa in the ceremony, represents a delicate balancing act. The Finance Ministry navigates a treacherous landscape, juggling diverse priorities of economic growth, social welfare, fiscal prudence, and political pressures. Ensuring both equity and sustainability in this pursuit poses several challenges.

- One major challenge lies in catering to competing needs. Implementing pro-growth policies might necessitate cuts in social spending, potentially impacting vulnerable sections. Conversely, prioritizing social welfare could restrict resources for infrastructure development, hindering long-term economic growth. Striking a balance that promotes inclusive progress remains a constant struggle.
- Furthermore, global economic uncertainties, natural disasters, and unforeseen emergencies can throw off projections, forcing last-minute adjustments and potentially derailing carefully laid plans. Adapting to these disruptions while maintaining fiscal responsibility adds immense pressure to the budgeting process.
- Moreover, balancing political will with public expectations presents another hurdle. Implementing bold reforms or tough measures, despite potential public discontent, can be politically risky. The Finance Ministry must navigate this tightrope walk, prioritizing long-term national good while addressing immediate concerns.

In conclusion, the Union Budget, with the Halwa Ceremony symbolizing its meticulous preparation, represents a complex balancing act. Ensuring equitable and sustainable development amid competing priorities, volatile economic climate, and political considerations necessitates careful planning, adaptability, and a commitment to responsible governance. Through constant negotiation and dialogue, the Finance Ministry strives to craft a budget that benefits all sections of society while laying the foundation for a brighter economic future.

***Remember: These are just sample answers. It's important to***

*further research and refine your responses based on your own understanding and perspective.*

**Relevance to the UPSC Prelims and Mains syllabus under the following topics:**



### **UPSC Prelims:**

#### **▪ Current Affairs:**

- Understanding the Halwa ceremony can broaden your knowledge of important national events and traditions.

It could be connected to questions on budgeting process, economic policies, or even cultural practices.

#### **Indian Economy:**

- Though not explicitly mentioned, the ceremony signifies the final stages of budget preparation, which contributes to the overall economic policy of the government.

### **UPSC Mains:**

- **Essay Paper:**
- The Halwa ceremony might inspire an essay on traditions in governance, secrecy and transparency, or cultural significance of food in Indian society.
- **General Studies Paper II (Governance):**
- You could briefly mention the ceremony while discussing budgetary processes, transparency measures, or decision-making mechanisms in the government.
- **General Studies Paper III (Indian Economy):**  
Similar to Mains Paper II, a brief mention of the ceremony could be relevant in the context of the budget's role in the economy or fiscal policy formulation.



*Click here to read in  
Hindi.*

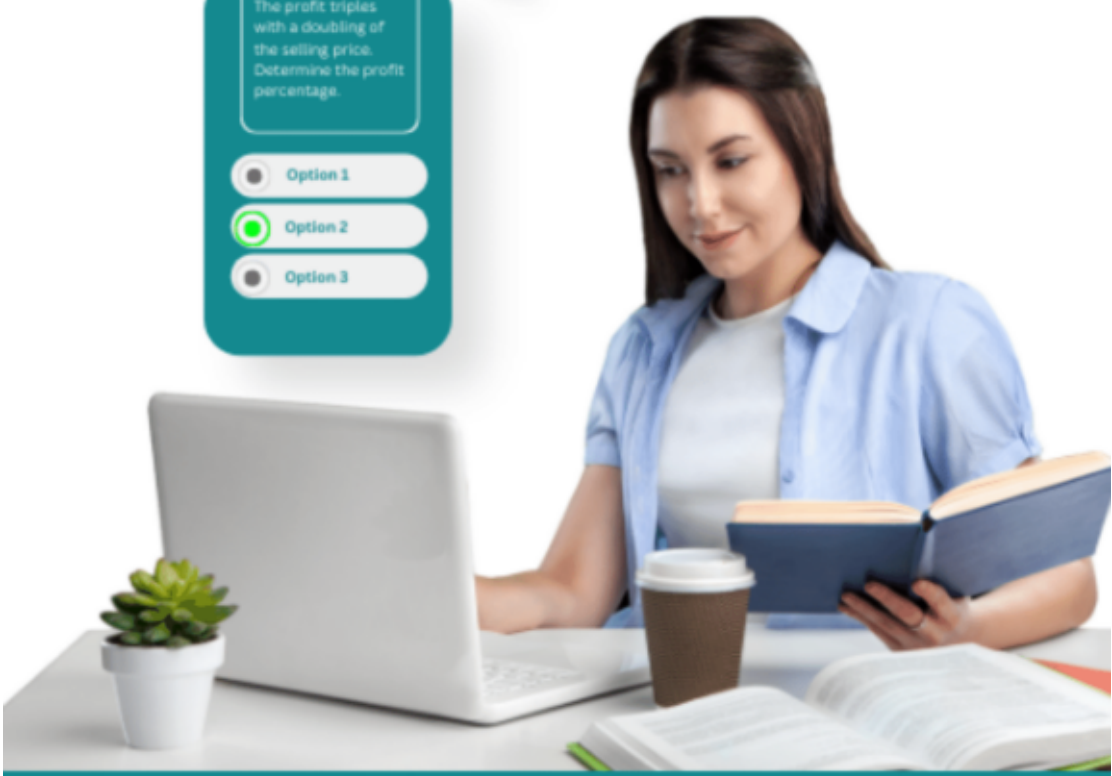
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The profit triples with a doubling of the selling price. Determine the profit percentage.

- Option 1
- Option 2
- Option 3



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