

## **Printing of Budget documents begins with 'Halwa' ceremony**

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley today performed the symbolic 'Halwa Ceremony' to mark the launch of formal printing of documents relating to the Union Budget 2018-19.

Jaitley is scheduled to present the last full budget of the current NDA government on February 1.

Minister of State for Finance Shiv Pratap Shukla and other senior ministers of the ministry also participated in the 'Halwa Ceremony' at the North Block.

"The Union Finance Minister, Shri @arunjaitley at the Halwa Ceremony with MoS (Finance), Shri @BJPShivPShukla & Senior Officers at North Block in New Delhi today and thereby launching the formal printing of different documents relating to the Union Budget 2018-19,"the finance ministry said in a tweet.

As part of the ritual, 'halwa' is prepared in a big 'kadhai' (large frying pot) and served to the entire staff in the ministry.

The significance of the sweet dish is that after it is served, a large number of officials and support staff, who are directly associated with the Budget making and printing process, are required to stay in the ministry and remain cut off from their families till the presentation of the Budget by the minister in the Lok Sabha.

They are not even allowed to contact their near and dear ones through phone or any other form of communication, like e-mail.

Only very senior officials in the finance ministry are permitted to go home.

*(Business Today)*