

Below the line

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The story of Bahi Khatha

The red bag — *bahi khatha* — that Nirmala Sitharaman used to carry Budget documents to Parliament was special in more ways than one.

It not only ended a century old tradition of Finance Ministers carrying a leather briefcase to Parliament on Budget Day, this red bag had the divine blessings of the deities at Siddhivinayak and Mahalaxmi temples at Mumbai before it came into possession of India's first full time woman Finance Minister.

Here is another interesting nugget. It now transpires that the red bag was designed and made by Sitharaman's aunt.

The official emblem was later embossed on it. Now is all that talk of letting go a colonial British hangover just incidental?

Dharma of stakeholders

In the recently held hearing in the NCLAT on Jaypee homebuyers case, the Chairperson told the lawyers what their '*dharma*' is, as the lawyers representing the lenders said they have certain issues with the NBCC's bid.

The judge said that '*dharma*' of all the stakeholders is to save the interest of the home buyers. Lenders recently rejected the NBCC's bid to acquire debt-ridden real estate company, while home buyers were in favour of it. This came when the lawyers from the lenders' side said that NBCC in its bid not only asks for a hair-cut, but want us to grow the hair and give it to them!

Pharmacy on wheels?

Riding high upon the success of Jan Aushadhi Scheme, which entails opening up pharmacies to offer cheap drugs, the Gujarat government sent an intriguing proposal to the Centre last

month. In a meeting of the Drug Consultative Committee held at the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, behind closed doors, Gujarat government officials moved a proposal to allow sale of drugs in moving vehicles, something akin to 'pharmacy on wheels'.

They proposed that this should be made possible in rural areas where it is hard to find any medical store and that the Drugs and Cosmetics Act should be amended for making the provision to issue licence to sell drugs from a motor vehicle.

The Drug Consultative Committee was quick to dismiss this proposal as it believes that misuse of an amended provision to sell drugs in moving vehicles will then be difficult to control. So much for Gujarat government's ambitions! Also, it would be enough to stock up primary health centres with basic drugs which are within 2-3 km of each village, rather than introduce drugs on wheels!

Busting Myths

At a time when misleading videos and fake news about food safety issues have gone viral, the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India has added a 'Myth Buster' feature on its website.

The 'Myth Buster' feature is part of the food safety authority's recent efforts to dispel rumours and gives scientific clarification on several misleading videos and news on issues such as plastic eggs or plastic rice in the market among others.

Last year, the regulator had also approached the Ministry of Electronics & IT expressing concerns about circulation of fake videos regarding food safety and food brands available in the market. Following this, the Ministry had also asked social media majors to pull down such videos to prevent the spread of such rumours.

Our Delhi Bureau