

ಪತ್ರಿಕಾ ತುಣುಕುಗಳು
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Not holding a brief from the past

Minister replaces leather briefcase with a cloth bag to carry Budget papers

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NEW DELHI

Presenting her maiden Budget, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday broke away from tradition when she replaced the conventional leather briefcase with a bright red cloth bag to carry the Budget papers to the Parliament House.

There were other significant departures as well. The Finance Minister skipped reading the allocations to different Ministries, or the macro economic numbers like projected revenues or expenditure.

At the end of her speech that extended beyond two hours and 15 minutes, Ms. Sitharaman did inform the Lok Sabha that all the num-



Nirmala Sitharaman arriving to present the Budget on Friday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

bers had been mentioned in the annexure of the Budget document.

Speaker Om Birla praised Ms. Sitharaman for presenting the Budget as the country's first full-time woman Finance Minister.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was among the first MPs to walk up to the Finance Minister to congratulate her after she finished. Several other Ministers, including Rajnath Singh, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Piyush Goyal and Smriti Irani, were seen congratulating her and sharing some light moments after her marathon speech.

Interestingly, while reading out the Budget, the Finance Minister didn't pause even to have a glass of water.

Family in attendance

And while she was reading out her speech - replete with Tamil, Urdu, Hindi and Sanskrit verses - her daughter and her maternal uncle and aunt watched the

proceedings from the Speaker's Gallery on the upper deck.

When Ms. Sitharaman walked into the Lok Sabha five minutes before the proceedings started at 11 a.m., she acknowledged their presence with a smiling nod.

Indira Gandhi was the first woman to present a Budget in 1970, when she was the Prime Minister. Her Finance Minister Morarji Desai had resigned from the Cabinet, prompting her to retain the Finance portfolio for a year.

Ms. Sitharaman's proposals were welcomed with frequent thumping of desks by the treasury benches.

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