

- (iii) Third Report on 'Demands for Grants (2024-25)' of the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I have to inform that a communication has been received from hon. Member, Shri Shibu Soren, stating that he is unable to attend the sittings of the current (266th) Session of the Rajya Sabha from 25th November to 20th December 2024 on medical grounds.

Does he have the permission of the House for remaining absent from 25th November to 20th December 2024 during the current (266th) Session of the Rajya Sabha?

(No hon. Member dissented)

MR. CHAIRMAN: Permission to remain absent is granted. We wish him a speedy recovery.

OBSERVATIONS BY THE CHAIR

MR. CHAIRMAN: Hon. Members, I have received two notices under Rule 267. As the House has already decided that these two days will be devoted for discussion on the Constitution, I appeal to the hon. Members not to press them.

DR. JOHN BRITTAS: I withdraw my notice, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Thank you! Hon. Members, today we commence a two-day commemoration of a defining moment in our nation's history, the 75th Anniversary of our Constitution's adoption on 26 November 1949. This milestone invites us not to just celebrate, but to deeply reflect on our journey and chart our path forward.

This Constitution has been the bedrock of the world's largest democracy, testament to the profound wisdom of its architects and the resilience of our democratic spirit.

Let our deliberations in this House, over the next two days, reflect the gravity of this occasion. May our discussions strengthen the bond between our

Parliamentary institutions that seek to serve 1.4 billion people, fructifying their expectations and aspirations.

As we look ahead to 2047, when India marks the Centenary of its Independence, let our debates illuminate the path forward towards our vision of *Viksit Bharat*.

Hon. Members, time will not be a constraint. In the Lok Sabha, the debate was fructifying in terms of time as well. I will accommodate as many speakers as may be keen to contribute. And, towards that, we will be increasing the time. I will report that at 2 PM today.

DISCUSSION ON THE "GLORIOUS JOURNEY OF 75 YEARS OF THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA"

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now, Srimati Nirmala Sitharaman to raise the discussion on the Glorious Journey of 75 Years of the Constitution of India.

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE; AND THE MINISTER OF CORPORATE AFFAIRS (SHRIMATI NIRMALA SITHARAMAN): Mr. Chairman, Sir, let me first start by thanking the hon'ble Prime Minister, the Leader of the House, Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda, my party, and yourself, the hon. Chairman, for giving me this opportunity to take part in this discussion, marking the historic occasion of 75 years of our Constitution. I feel very honoured and equally I feel humbled that this opportunity has been given to me. I thank the entire House and seek your indulgence if I come up with some thoughts, that I would like to share here, on which any Member could have a difference of opinion. But I will start again by paying homage to all the 389 Members of the Constituent Assembly, in particular, the 15 women Members who, in less than three years, together took up the arduous challenge and prepared, in a very challenging environment, the Constitution for India, which has stood the test of time. And, till today, we are extremely proud of the way India's democracy is growing.

As we mark the 75th year of our Constitution, it is time, I would think, to reaffirm our commitment to build India, that is *Bharat*, that shall uphold the spirit enshrined in this sacred document. So with those words, I get into telling about the journey, that these 75 years have seen, of our Indian Constitution, and also to say why India's Constitution and India today stands out in a very separate league of its own. Sir, let me just remind, and I am sure very many Members of this House will know, that post-Second World War, nearly 50 countries, in fact, over 50 countries,