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Title : Regarding desecration of statues of famous Telugu personalities by unruly mob during Million March at Hyderabad on 10 March, 2011.

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL (VIJAYAWADA): Hon. Chairman, it is with deep anguish and heart-burn, I would like to bring to the notice of the entire House that on 10<sup>th</sup> March, there was a march in Hyderabad. In Tank Bund, sixteen statues of eminent personalities, like poets and litterateurs were demolished, which amounts to cultural vandalism. It has parallel only in Afghanistan when Taliban vandalised the Buddha statue. Such a culture has crept in. We have seen this and we are a witness to it. At that time, as many as 20 lakh students were writing intermediate examinations and Tenth examinations. This march was an illegal one. No permission was granted to it. In the broad day light, these statues were demolished. These statues were of great personalities, like Annamacharya who wrote devotional songs on Lord Balaji; Nannaya who wrote Mahabharatam in Telugu; Molla who wrote Ramayanam in Telugu; Sir Arthur Cotton who constructed dams in Andhra Pradesh and built Krishna-Godavari delta systems in more than 25 lakh hectares; and the great King Sri Krishna Devaraya. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. CHAIRMAN : You made your point. What do you want?

SHRI L. RAJAGOPAL : I am coming to that.

The most important point is that the national parties took part in that illegal march. People who claim to be custodians and saviours of cultures took part in that. I have a statement, which I want to quote. On 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2010, a former Central Minister, who was the Minister of State for Home Affairs, belonging to a national party said that statues will be demolished. Five months prior to this incident, he claimed that and he belongs to the BJP. The CPI also participated in this *march*. In fact, it was very heart-burning for the entire Andhra Pradesh. That was a cultural assault. It was an act of vandalism. That was a cultural assault on Telugu culture. Is it not a part of Indian culture? Telugu culture is also a part of the Indian culture. We should respect every culture. But, unfortunately, not only the statues even the media men were also not spared. They were attacked. All the cameras were broken. â€¦ (*Interruptions*) All this happened on broad-day light.

So, I want the Government of India to bring in stringent laws on people who encourage and participate in activities which amount to cultural vandalism.