a general feeling that anyone can get away with anything seems to have become a bad habit that our nation has acquired.

We live in an age of rage: campus violence, street violence, political violence, domestic violence. Today the Jawans, tomorrow....? I do not think any citizen is safe until we swiftly create a society where crime is dealt with severely, and rules and laws are enforced strictly. The Pilkhana tragedy may have many other implications, but the most basic lesson should be that anti-social and anti-humanitarian acts must not be tolerated, condoned. Nothing, no demands or complaints should justify resorting to violence; and only democratic means must



be employed to redress any grievance. Breaking of law and humanitarian violations must not be treated leniently.

We Bangalis took up arms once, for a cause, and protested for large issues. But the meaningless brutality within the BDR headquarters has sent shock waves of disgust through anyone who calls himself human or humane. We must not let this happen again.

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I stand under the Mimosa which continues to wave its yellow flag. There is a 'Stop' sign nearby. It is my imagination, of course, but I feel the Mimosa is asking me to stop for a moment, to not rant or rave, not meditate nor reflect; just suspend myself in the moment. I observe a few minutes of silence. The breeze blows gently, prayerfully. The Mimosa offers the consolation of its beauty.

I look around me. This is a residential street with few cars and yet, I observe as if I were seeing things with new eyes, how the neighbourhood cars come to a full stop at the sign before they proceed. There are no speed bumps to enforce this nor cameras installed to detect violations; just this sign. And yet, I notice that even when they know that the streets are probably empty, the drivers still follow the rules of civic behaviour and street-safety, diligently. Some cars, even when they don't stop fully, slow down. The residents of this neighbourhood all respect the rules and laws. There is an acceptance that for their own safety and for society to protect its citizens, people must agree to obey laws and follow some basic principles of self-discipline.

In any civilized society, obedience of and respect for civic and humanitarian principles should be non-negotiable. And the pain of breaking laws must be penalty. If we do not bring wrongdoers, criminals and killers to justice we send the wrong message to future lawbreakers.

Under the Mimosa I pray that we help the bereaved families overcome some part of their irreparable loss, and as a nation we can proceed towards justice, towards a democracy where we learn from our mistakes and create responsible, law respecting citizens, who never dare to even think they can take the law into their own hands with impunity.

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In a few weeks the Mimosa's bright flowers will be gone, and the tree will return to being an ordinary leafy tree till next year. But it has ingrained faith in the indestructibility of its beauty, knows that at the end of another winter it will come to life again, briefly but memorably.

Human life too, is short but it is eternal, undying. Nature tells us that; my Mimosa tells me that. Those we lost in the recent Pilkhana tragedy will be undying parts of our land, of the eternal tree of life which is our nation. Even when the misguided and the barbarians hack at it, as long as we tend to the roots, have faith in it, no tree dies, no nation flounders, no death goes unremembered, no life is wasted.

A sprig from the Mimosa to all.