

Cat among the pigeons

That was, literally, how **Pramod Chaudhari's** entrepreneurial career began – and almost ended.

“When I was five or six years old, I saw some older boys training pigeons to fly away and come back on command,” says Chaudhari, who addressed a session of the BDB Book Club last fortnight. “So I thought it would be a good idea to breed pigeons to train and sell.” He and some



friends bought a few four-day-old chicks at four annas (25 paise) each, and made wooden boxes for them thanks to their carpentry classes at school. The breathing

holes they made were ‘generous’ – unfortunately, as it turned out. Reliving the experience in his book ***As Is What Is***, he describes how, “to our utter shock, the pigeons had vanished the next morning!” Only some stray feathers lying around bore testimony to the obvious fact: that a cat had got the chicks, which they had hoped to sell for a rupee each, through the breathing holes. Now, having built up Praj Industries to become a force to reckon with in ethanol plants, the company’s founder and executive chairman Chaudhari warns against becoming like a “dog walking under a bullock-cart, which believes that it is taking it forward”.

