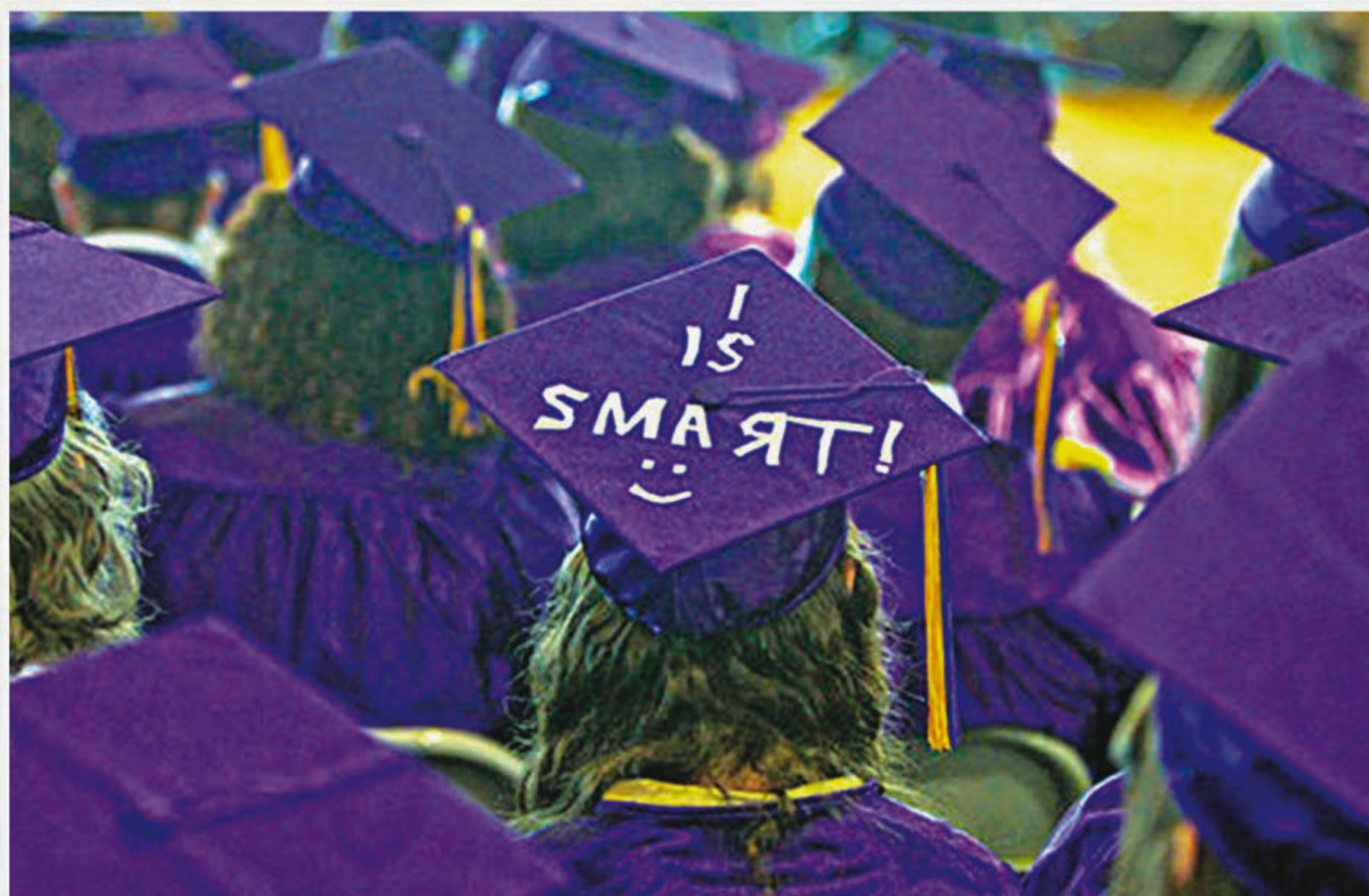**ECHOES BY ASRAR CHOWDHURY**

CGPA: The Average of All Averages

The other day, Echoes told you 'The Average Story of the Average'. Today, Echoes talks about a special average, the CGPA. Even if you don't know that CGPA stands for Cumulative Grade Point Average, you know the average very well. It's the average you chase. It's the average that chases you all the time.

To keep things simple, there are two people. One is you. The other is the outside world. Let's assume: you finished your undergraduate with a CGPA of 3.80/4. This is high by any standard.

Your CGPA of 3.80 is cumulative. It's the combined average of all the grade point averages (GPA) of all the courses you took. In some courses you scored less than 3.80, while in others you scored more than 3.80. When the outside world reads your CGPA they come to two conclusions. First: this student has been good in most of the courses he took. Second: since he was good in most of the courses he took, he could be good in other tasks too. This flow of reasoning by the outside world is logical.

When the outside world assesses you, it needs a benchmark to judge how good you and others are because there's an information gap. The outside world doesn't know you and others. Therefore, to draw attention, everybody wants to shout their abilities to the outside world. So, each sends a signal. The problem is: the signal has to be credible. The outside world has to believe it with sound logic. If the signal makes sense, the outside world can use it as a benchmark to assess you and others with the above logic. That signal, so far, has been the CGPA.

Let's now assume: you've applied to two workplaces. Workplace 1 is a factory where you will sew buttons on dresses. People work in groups. The task is simple, but monotonous. Workplace 2 is the academia. You will teach students and publish articles in journals. There's good news. You get the opportunity to choose between both jobs. Let's see how misleading your CGPA can become, although you worked so hard for it.

Here's the CGPA logic once more: You were good in most of your courses. Therefore, you'll be good in other tasks too.

Workplace 1: Just because your CGPA is 3.8, it doesn't guarantee you'll be good at sewing buttons and also working in a group. Both are skills your CGPA may not be able to reflect well. Workplace 2: the same logic applies. Teaching is a skill that isn't well reflected in a high CGPA. You either have the skill or you don't. Your ability to publish in journals may be reflected by your undergrad CGPA, but in this day and age, publishing also requires a skill of how good you are at presenting yourself.

Does this mean that the CGPA isn't a good benchmark? No. The CGPA is the best known benchmark for students and employers. The problem arises when we get blinded by the CGPA because a CGPA gives a general idea, not a specific one.

Those who kill themselves for a high CGPA for the sake of getting one, sacrifice time that could be used to develop other faculties of talent and skill they possess during their most productive time in life: their youth. Employers often fail to realise: a CGPA reflects performance in courses at university. These courses may not have relevance in the real world. Therefore, it doesn't necessarily imply: because the student was good in most courses, therefore the student will be good in other tasks too.

Is there a meaningful signal for students and employers? Yes, there is. It's called apprenticeship. This was an institution in a time gone by. It needs to be reborn because every individual is different from the other.

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A Dash of Bohemian

LABIBA MUSTABINA

The life of a free spirit, far from the chaos and strings of a routine life, a Bohemian life: that's the dream. Sadly, it continues to be the bubble that is burst every day. Then again, who's to say that you cannot be a rebel and lets your Bohemian-self seep through? Read on and let a bit of that boho-chic dust off on you.

FEATHER HEADGEAR

If you have long, beautiful locks of hair you would be glad you didn't go get that haircut. Now you get to have your hair adorned with an array of feather clips. This simple DIY needs only a few simple things: cotton cords, big bobby pins, thin craft/iron wire, masking tape, hot glue and feathers. Cotton cords can be made by cutting off the tips of old shoe laces, iron wire can be found in any hardware store and for feathers your most reliable source are car feather dusters.

For the making, cut off the tip of the feather to create a hole at the bottom of the feather stalk. Using about 4 inches of iron wire, create a loop and twist the ends together. Then secure the wire loop in the hole at the feather stalk with masking tape. Next, tie one end of the cord to the wire loop while slinging the other end through the bobby pin. Thread about 3-4 such wired feathers down the cord, pinching the wire loop in the desired level and adding a dab of hot glue to hold it in place. Wrap some embroidery thread around the cord and you're good to go.

A different way to go is a feather fedora - a charming accessory for all those romantics and dreamers (and fans of Shah Rukh Khan's classics). Dear men, you can upgrade any boring old hat, preferably fabric made, with some feather, a satin/velvet ribbon (preferably in a solid colour) and dabs of hot glue. Simply brush the good old hat off, cut your ribbon of choice a little bigger than the base of the crown of your hat and secure in place with hot glue. Next, arrange your feather(s) and simply glue it onto one side of the band of your hat.

CROCHET DREAM CATCHERS AND MORE

Perhaps I'm not alone when I say there's an abundance of elegantly crafted yet neglected crochet pieces lying scattered in our homes which need to be restored to glory. You can easily create a beautiful dream catcher from a crochet doily, some string, beads, an embroidery frame and feathers. Entrap the crochet piece within the wooden frame and fancy a hook out of some wire as a hanging piece. Next, thread the beads onto the string creating about 4-5 chains and tie them on the other end of the frame, securing with hot glue. Finish your dream catcher by attaching a feather at the bottom of each string by wrapping some wire and masking tape.

If you're left with some more doilies, craft an elegant centrepiece bowl using nothing but some glue and a glass bowl. Apply petroleum jelly over the bottom of the glassware shape you want to attain and keep upright. Mix equal parts flour and adhesive with some water and brush over the doily. Next, place the glue soaked doily over the bowl and dry overnight. You won't even believe your eyes when it has transformed into a bowl the next morning.

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