Celebrating an 18th birthday should be a grand affair. It is after all considered a milestone in a person's life – the rite of passage to adulthood. For *the Star* magazine it is another step forward in the journey of trying to reinvent itself to be relevant to its readers. Over these eighteen years we have seen many changes in the magazine. From Star Weekend Magazine (SWM) it became *the Star*. From a conventional weekend magazine with food, fashion and lifestyle included, it began to delve into unchartered areas – feminist thoughts, human rights, even politics. The magazine also became a platform for fresh voices – from home and abroad. Our oldest columns included the highly popular Chintito, Write to Mita and A Roman Column and later were joined by others – One Off, Food for Thought, Straight Talk, Writing the Wrong, Village Flute etc. Through these columns these writers have brought in intriguing perspectives on international and national politics, society and human nature in general. To these columnists our eternal gratitude for giving *the Star* its unique, eclectic flavour.

Inside *the Star* there have been many individuals, each of whom, have brought to the table, something new and refreshing. Our weekly brainstorming has always been a source of great pain and great pleasure despite the change in team members. We thank each and every person who has been involved with the magazine – some who have stayed longer than others, giving all their efforts with sincerity and dedication, to make the magazine more attractive and intellectually stimulating. *The Star* has been privileged to have in its team some amazing writers, photographers, graphic artists and cartoonists over the years, giving the publication an edge over all other English language weekly publications. To them we are indeed indebted. Upholding the tradition, *the Star's* current team continues to strive to bring new and innovative content to provoke the readers' imagination.

We also appreciate the efforts of our production team, our advertising and advertising department whose contributions are often taken for granted.

And there have been a remarkable mix of contributing writers who have helped to enrich *the Star* bringing with them their experience and honesty to delight our readers and make them think. These include our regular contributors from outside who have most loyally kept on writing for us as well as all those gifted reporters and editors from *The Daily Star*'s news, editorial and culture sections who have generously shared their views and stories. We thank them with all our heart.

Most of all we will be eternally grateful to the person who brought *the Star* magazine into existence by taking a chance on a group of young, inexperienced individuals – *The Daily Star*'s editor and publisher Mahfuz Anam who has unstintingly supported, encouraged and inspired us against all odds over these eighteen years.

In this 64 –page anniversary special we have tried to touch upon one of the most crucial questions of our time : Can we hope for a better future for Bangladesh? Our cover story 'Of Apples and Ideas' brings in the thoughts and projections of Bangladesh's most renowned visionaries analyzing how change can be brought about in the way we do business, govern our country, maintain peace and security, nurture our environment and represent our country to the world. 'Can the Next Generation Give Us Hope?' focuses on the strategies adopted by the new generation of politicians to make Bangladesh more modern and economically healthy. 'The Dawn of the New' analyses the exciting new wave in mainstream music. '18 Days that Shook Bangladesh' identifies eighteen events that have changed our history forever. Finally we have a few of our most talked about columns talking about Bangladesh's image, the generation gap and how to measure self worth. We have not been able to include many of our regular features and columns due to space constraints. But we hope that this special issue will give our readers enough fodder to mull over, react to and be regaled by.

As we complete our eighteenth year we promise our readers to keep on striving to draw their attention with diverse subjects, engaging writing styles, better pictures and graphical representation and most of all many more stories – on things that affect us as a society. Thank you, all of you, for standing by us.

– AASHA MEHREEN AMIN
Editor, The Star

HAPPY 18TH

