



MYTHOLOGICAL CONNECTIONS

There is an interesting story behind these festivities as well. Legend has it that the origins of this festival can be traced to a Brahmin who stayed in a village and did severe penance to appease Lord Shiva. Pleased with his efforts, Lord Shiva granted him a boon that gave him the power to purify all holy rivers. The Brahmin was then called 'Pushkar' (meaning, the one who nourishes). While travelling from one zodiac sign to another, Brihaspati or Jupiter requested Pushkar to make the 12 sacred rivers holy.

The first twelve days are called Adi Pushkaram and the last

twelve days are referred to as Anthya Pushkaram. It is thought that during these 24 days, Pushkar will be travelling with Jupiter, as it transitions from one Zodiac sign to another and will be making any river holy. Various *poojas* and rituals are performed during the Pushkaram celebrations, including those related to the reverence of ancestors, devotional music, cultural programmes and spiritual discourses. The devotees present can participate in a variety of activities including *snana* (bath in the river), *dna* (charity), *japa* (recitation of mantras), *archana* (offering prayers) and *dhyana* (meditation).

(Top) The statue of Krishnaveni near the Prakasam Barrage; (Above) A stunning sunset over the River Krishna

