

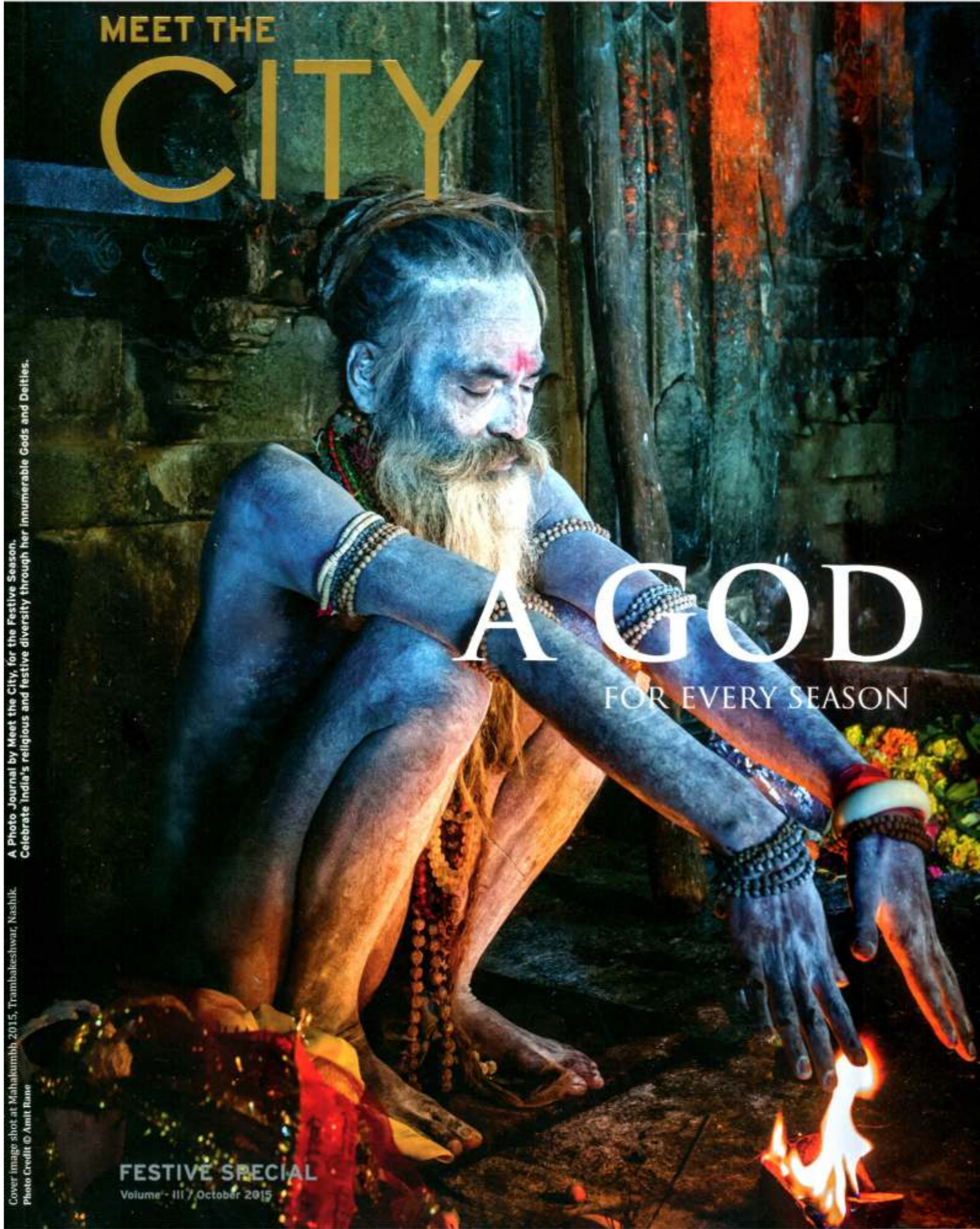
MEET THE  
CITY

A GOD  
FOR EVERY SEASON

A Photo Journal by Meet the City, for the Festive Season.  
Celebrate India's religious and festive diversity through her Innumerable Gods and Deities.

Cover image shot at Mahakumbh, 2015, Trimbakeshwar, Nashik.  
Photo Credit © Anil Bane

FESTIVE SPECIAL  
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Millions of Muslims in India (and across the world) celebrate their biggest religious festival Eid-al-Fitr, which marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

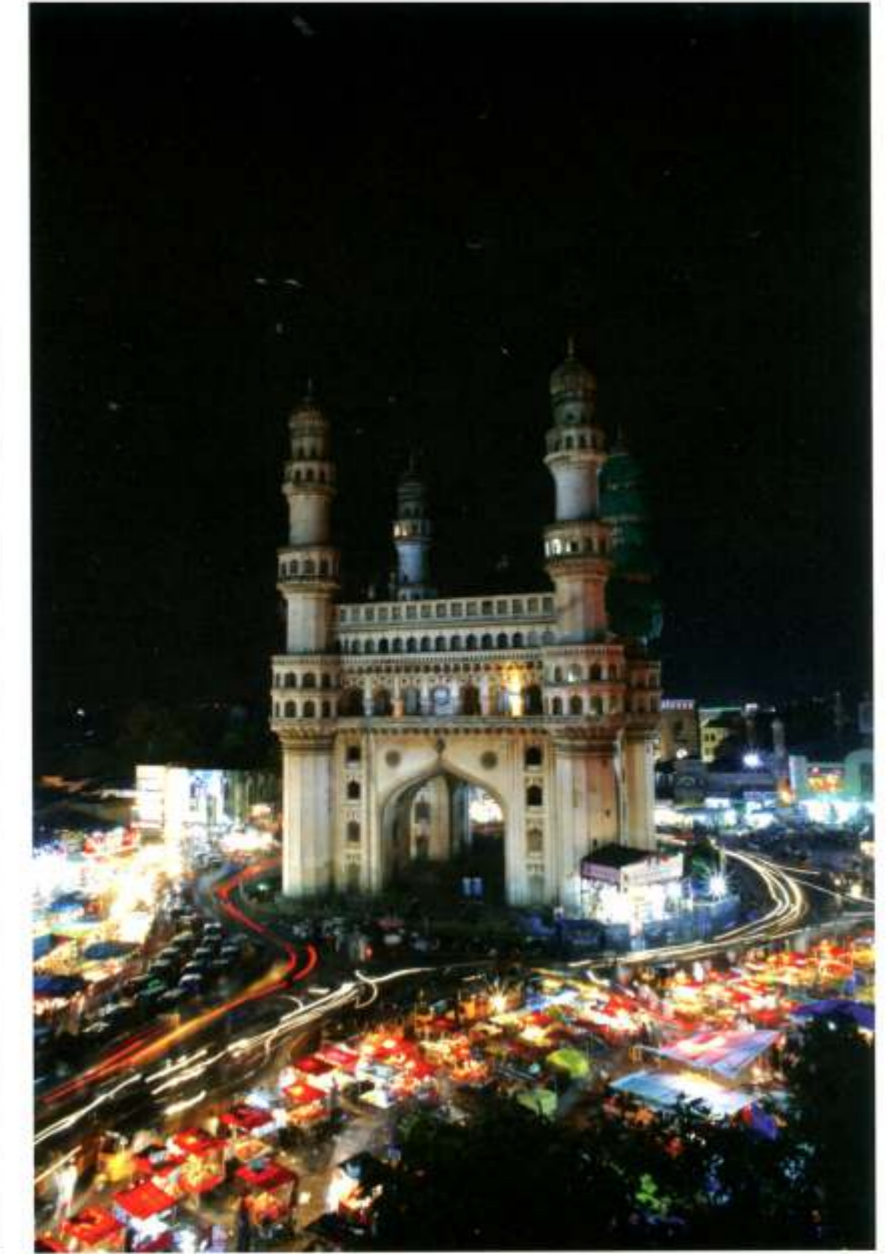
Eid-al-Fitr celebrates the conclusion of the 29 or 30 days of fasting during the entire month of Ramadan, when people refrain from eating, drinking, and smoking from dawn to dusk. People break their fast in the evening with light a meal known as *Iftar*. *Iftar* parties in modern times are social events, involving family and friends and are gaining immense popularity especially amongst the urban milieu.

In India, the night before Eid is called *Chaand Raat* (Night of the Moon), and people visit bazaars and malls for Eid shopping. Women and girls adorn their hands with *henna* and don colourful bangles.



A Kashmiri Muslim prays inside the Jama Mosque in Srinagar, in India. Ramadan, the holiest month of the Islamic lunar calendar, is when devout Muslims refrain from all food, drink or sex during daylight hours and focus on devotion and good works. The Muslim festival of Eid-al-Fitr is then celebrated at the end of Ramadan.

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The first fortnight of Ramadan at Charminar, Hyderabad

Photo © Rajesh Pamnani

## BONALU

The word Bonalu originates from *Bonam* which means *Bhojanam* or Meal in Telegu, and is an offering to Goddess Mahakali. Across Telangana, people perform *pujas* for the goddess as a thanksgiving for the fulfillment of vows. The festival takes place in *Ashada Masam*, in Jul-August each year. Bonalu dates back to 1813 to the Hyderabad and Secunderabad regimental bazaar, which was witness to a breakout of the plague, claiming thousands of lives. A military battalion that was deployed at Ujjain at the time was concerned for the safety of their family and friends back home and offered prayers to Goddess Mahakali vowing to install her idol in Secunderabad. It is believed that their prayers were answered and the spread of the disease was halted. Upon their return, the military battalion installed the goddess's idol by offering her Bonalu.



Photo © Rajesh Pannani



This woman appeared enchanted and in a trance while praying to the Goddess, facing the temple, while other worshipping women walked past her. It seemed as if she had successfully established a WiFi connection with the Goddess and was in a deep communication with the almighty.

Photo © Shashank Mhasawade