

# OUTDOOR EVENT? CALL 1800-RAIN-SHAMAN



## CULTURAL AND SPIRITUAL SIGNIFICANCE

Pawang Hujan play a significant role in Indonesian traditional cultures, especially in agrarian communities where rainfall is crucial for successful crop cultivation. The belief in rain shamans is often deeply rooted in animistic or indigenous spiritual practices that connect the natural elements with the supernatural.

## TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

These individuals are often considered guardians of traditional knowledge related to weather patterns, celestial events, and the natural environment. The methods and practices employed by Pawang Hujan are passed down through generations, contributing to the preservation of cultural heritage. These shamans, through a deep understanding and connection with nature, perform rituals and ceremonies to invoke, delay, or stop rain. Their role extends beyond just weather manipulation as they are often sought for guidance and wisdom.

## CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVES

Many people see rain shamans as superstitious, but it depends on one's perspective. The majority of people in Indonesia are religious so some see this practice as 'wrong' according to to their beliefs. But from the perspective of local religions, which existed years before imported religion, these rituals have existed for thousands of years, as has the relationship between people and the natural world. Though, most people who practice presently are religious and their respective religions change the the way the rituals are conducted (changing the offerings, the prayers, etc.)

## THE RITUALS

The ritual differs from person to person, but it most often starts with a prayer. Some Pawang Hujan fast for some time prior to the event. Most believe in communicating with a being tied to or responsible for the area of the event, providing offerings ranging from incense, flowers, drinks, and fruit. Some don't provide offerings and prefer to recite a chant or prayer near a water source in the area.

The clouds are seemingly moved with a wave of the hand, some holding a kris (dagger) and incense, others with a copper bowl, others with a cigarette and a coffee. The ability can be learned with experience and practice, but a lot of pawang hujan come from families of practitioners.

# CONTROLLING THE WEATHER WITH THE PAWANG HUJAN

While many might be sceptical, several Indonesians believe in the ability of these "Pawang Hujan", or "rain-diviners", to control the weather. In a nation that experiences sudden monsoon downpours for months each year, these rain shamans are often hired to keep weddings, concerts, and even government events rain-free.

Seated cross-legged amid a fog of incense and platters of fragrant offerings, dishes of red chillies, garlic bulbs and frangipani petals, Indonesian shaman Ki Joko Sapu-Jagat prepares at home the night before an outdoor wedding.

"In principle we work without changing nature. Instead we fortify the area where the event is," said Ki Joko, 57, staring up at a patch of ominous gray clouds, as he explained how he creates an invisible barrier of protection to move clouds to other places.

Surveying the venue's leafy perimeter, Ki Joko, in a Javanese shirt and batik bandana, stopped at a quiet corner and planted precious heirlooms, including a handful of small bronzed krises, or daggers, into the earth around a plate of fresh flowers. Ki Joko comes from an ancestral line of Balinese rain shamans, and has been a "Pawang Hujan" for decades, picking up the craft from his mother in his late teens.

"Their work is between 70-100% successful," noted venue manager Yata. "There are situations where the conditions are extreme and they can't prevent it, But their presence is very helpful for outdoor events like this."

Despite the grey skies looming over the nuptials, no rain was shed during the ceremony, Reuters observed.



## STOPPING THE RAIN AT THE 2022 MOTOGP GRAND PRIX

Hiring rain shamans at big outdoor events is pretty standard practice in Indonesia, where fees can range from \$100 to the reported \$7,000 or so paid to Rara Istiani Wulandari, a 38-year-old Pawang Hujan from Bali, by MotoGP's local organizers. She has a pretty impressive resumé and reportedly proved her abilities at the 2018 Asian Games in Jakarta and Palembang, and at a football match in the 2018 AFC U-19 Cup.

On March 19 2022, Rara walked barefoot on the racetrack clutching incense sticks and a brass singing bowl in her left hand, and a mallet in her right. A live telecast showed her pacing the circuit with outstretched arms, chanting to the heavens. She made turns running the mallet around the bowl's rim and then striking it, its reverberations inaudible through the din of the impatient crowd and the patter of rain. The ritual went on for more than an hour until, finally, the rain stopped.

## THE PRAYER (OF ONE PRACTITIONER)

#	WORDS / PHRASES / SENTENCES	MEANING
1.	Astaghfirullah, alladzi la ilaha illa huwal hayyul qayyumu wa atuubu ilaih.	I ask for forgiveness from Allah, who has no god but Him. the almighty and almighty stand alone. and I repent to Him.
2.	"Allahumma solli 'alaa muhammad, wa 'alaa aali muhammad, kamaa sollaita 'alaa aali ibroohim, wa alaa aali ibroohim, fil 'aalamiina innaka hamiidummajid".	Ya Allah, shower blessings on Muhammad and the family of Muhammad, just as you showered blessings on Ibrahim and the family of Ibrahim. in the whole universe, indeed you are the most praiseworthy and the most majestic.
3.	Asyhadu an laa ilaaha illallaahu, wa asyhad-uanna muhammadar rasuulullah".	I believe that there is no god but Allah. and I testify that the prophet Muhammad is the messenger of God.
4.	Bismillāhir-rahmānir-raḥīm'	By chanting the name of God who is all-loving and all-compassionate.
5.	'Al-ḥamdu lillāhi rabbil-ālamīn'	All praise be to God, the Lord of all the worlds.
6.	Ar-rahmānir-raḥīm'	Who is merciful and merciful.
7.	Mālikiyaumid-dīn'	Who rules the day of retribution.