

# Imagining a Future in Technicolor

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Danantara Indonesia Investor Relations Team



Black-and-white photography mirrors the duality of diaspora life. It oscillates between worlds: here and there, belonging and estrangement, assimilation and memory.

"The best time to plant a tree was twenty years ago.  
The second best time is **now.**"

**CHINESE PROVERB**

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The dinner was scheduled for Sunday evening, and I wanted to bail.

We had just landed in London after an 18-hour flight. It was drizzling, of course. All I wanted was to curl up in my hotel room, sleep off the jet lag, and prepare for the week's investor meetings.

But everyone else from the team was going, so I took out my umbrella and trudged toward the Gold Mine, a Chinese restaurant in Notting Hill. (Before you ask: yes, get the roast duck.)

I am glad I did, and not just for the duck.



*Danantara Indonesia Chief Investment Officer Pandu Sjahrir (center) with young Indonesian professionals in London / Photo credit: Young Indonesian Professionals' Association, UK*

We were meeting members of the UK chapter of the Young Indonesian Professionals' Association (YIPA): Indonesians building careers in banking, tech, law, consulting, energy, and academia.

And if you are an Indonesian who has spent time abroad, whether for school or work, there is this indescribable buzz when a group of Indonesians congregate in a foreign country. You may be complete strangers, but you have an instant bond with everybody in the room, thanks to your shared identity: an Indonesian living far away from home.

Diasporic life often oscillates between worlds. Here and there, belonging and estrangement, assimilation and memory. It is a duality mirrored by black-and-white photographs: lives lived in contrast, where identity is constantly being negotiated in shades of gray.

That is what I felt when I entered the restaurant. I was not part of their group, and yet I felt like I knew their stories. It reminded of my own days as an Indonesian student in the diaspora, living far away from family, but always with a group of Indonesian friends who made it feel as close to home as it could be.

The room, on the third floor, was so full that people outnumbered chairs. Everyone exchanged anecdotes about late nights, big opportunities, surviving winter. It was a noisy, casual affair, until our Chief Investment Officer Pandu Sjahrir asked the golden question:

“Would you ever come home?”

Silence.

Not because it was the first time someone had asked, but because it is the one question every Indonesian abroad thinks about all the time.

# A New Kind of Homecoming

That question lingers long after we left the dinner table.

For many Indonesians abroad, returning is not just about coming home. It is about whether there is a place back home where their skills and experience can matter. That, in essence, is what the Bali International Hospital (BIH) is trying to answer.

Every year, millions of Indonesians travel overseas for medical care, more than 2 million in 2022 alone, spending an estimated US\$10 billion. BIH, part of the Sanur Special Economic Zone (SEZ), aims to change that by creating a healthcare ecosystem that can rival Singapore or Penang while staying deeply rooted in Indonesia.



*The lobby at Bali International Hospital / Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia Investor Relations Team*

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When Danantara Indonesia's investor relations team visited BIH, we found a world-class facility nestled just meters from the ocean. What's not to love? (We were this close to applying for jobs ourselves. Then we remembered we actually needed to go to medical school first.)

But building a hospital is not just about gleaming walls and ocean views. It is about the people inside it.

For doctors, especially those in Indonesia, a medical degree is just the beginning. By the time they can fully practice, they are often in their early thirties. For diaspora doctors returning from abroad, the journey can be even harder. Years of experience overseas do not always translate at home, and bureaucracy can make it difficult for them to reintegrate.

BIH offers a bold alternative. Instead of spending one to two years in public hospitals, returning doctors can fast-track their integration through competency evaluations and adaptation programs. The hospital also offers on-site accommodation and family compensation packages, making the move home feasible and attractive.

Today, BIH's medical team includes 97 doctors: 71 local, 14 diaspora, and 12 foreign. Their specialties span cardiology, oncology, neurology, gastroenterology, and orthopedics, all areas that often drive Indonesians abroad for treatment.

Of course, hospitals cannot exist without patients. And the real question is: why do so many Indonesians, especially the affluent, prefer seeking medical care abroad?



That is what the Sanur SEZ is designed to answer. Developed under Danantara Indonesia company InJourney, the SEZ integrates healthcare and tourism to rebuild trust and close systemic gaps in access, quality, and perception.

Case in point: the Meru Sanur, a beachfront resort also owned by InJourney, sits just a short walk from BIH. Patients and families can recover in an environment that feels more like a wellness retreat than a hospital ward.



*Entrance to the radiology department / Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia Investor Relations Team*

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From the lobby alone, BIH makes its message clear. Patients are greeted in a resort-like space with wellness zones, multilingual staff, and hospitality features that put comfort at the center of recovery. The architecture and service model reflect a dual commitment to clinical excellence and patient experience.

BIH's partnerships with global institutions, including Innoquest, Icon Cancer Center, and HK Asia, ensure that its clinical standards align with international benchmarks. Its SEZ status also enables access to imported specialty drugs not yet available in Indonesia, particularly for advanced cancer and cardiac treatments.



*The reception at The Meru / Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia Investor Relations Team*

## Early Signs of Change

BIH is just one part of a larger vision: one stretching far beyond the hospital walls.

The Sanur Special Economic Zone is designed to turn Bali into a regional hub for health and wellness. Its incentives are among the most generous in Indonesia: tax holidays of up to twenty years, import duty exemptions, one-stop licensing, and 80-year land titles.

Foreign medical companies can establish operations quickly, but only if they partner with local firms. It is a rule meant to ensure that skills and knowledge are passed on to Indonesian talents.



*Sanur is the oldest resort town in Bali, and today, it is still holding on to its timeless calm.*

*Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia Investor Relations Team*

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One such partnership is between PT Hotel Indonesia Natour and Bluecross International, which together formed Bluecross Medika, a “Center of Excellence” that will host up to twenty clinics in plastic surgery, aesthetics, hair transplants, and stem cell therapy. It reflects a growing regional demand for high-quality, ethically regulated medical aesthetics.

All of these efforts point to the same goal: to make coming home not just a sentimental idea, but a real opportunity to contribute.



*Sanur's sunrise coastline, long known for its calm waters and soft light.*

*Photo credit: Danantara Indonesia Investor Relations Team*



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BIH officially opened in April 2025. By early October, it has welcomed over 1,000 patients. So far, 60% are foreigners and 40% Indonesians: a ratio the hospital hopes to reverse as domestic awareness grows. Already, BIH has begun to win back patients who once flew to Singapore or Malaysia for treatment.

Behind those numbers is the beginning of a shift: patients who once traveled abroad now choosing to stay, and diaspora doctors starting to see a path home.

By the end of 2025, BIH plans to expand to 117 beds and introduce PET-CT scan services. Its longer-term roadmap includes complex surgeries, robotic procedures, and transplants, along with new services in maternal health, oncology, dialysis, and sports medicine.

It is still early days, but BIH represents something larger than healthcare. It is a glimpse of what can happen when Indonesians abroad see a reason to return. When coming home is no longer a compromise, but a continuation.

Back in London, that night's conversation stayed with me. Some of those in the room had moved abroad for opportunity. Others stayed because their industries barely exist back home. Yet everyone shared the same hope: to one day return with something more to give.

Maybe that is why the Bali story resonated so deeply. It reminded me of what that dinner had crystallized: that for many Indonesians abroad, the question has never been whether to come home, but what kind of home they would be returning to.

Imagine a cardiologist trained in Boston now leading a department in Bali. Imagine a cancer patient from Surabaya who no longer needs to fly to Penang every two weeks, but checks into BIH instead.

Imagine all that, and multiply it across industries, across islands. A tall order, yes, but a future that feels closer than it once did.

A future in technicolor.

"Pressure is a privilege," Pandu told the room that night, quoting tennis legend Billie Jean King. "Our job is to make sure that when you come home, you have the platform to lead."

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*Pandu Sjahrir (center) and young Indonesian professionals in London after the event /*

*Photo credit: Young Indonesian Professionals' Association, UK*

# Did You Know?

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*The Blanjong Pillar and the Meru Sanur*

*Photo credits: Wikimedia Commons, Danantara Indonesia Investor Relations Team*

Bali's oldest known written record is the Blanjong Pillar, or *Prasasti Blanjong*. A stone inscription from 914 CE, it is located in Sanur's Blanjong Temple.

Remarkably, the pillar is bilingual. Written in both Sanskrit and Old Balinese, it reflects early Bali's cultural links with Java and India.

Today, Sanur still tell stories. Not on stone, but through mediums like design and structure. One example is The Meru Sanur, a hotel owned by Danantara Indonesia company Injourney, whose wood-based tropical-style structure is a major architectural draw.

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*Danantara Indonesia Diaries is a newsletter produced by Danantara Indonesia's investor relations team.*

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