

Crystal Ball Gazing Into 2022



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The Year of the Water Tiger starts on February 1, 2022. And, what we can learn from the numerous horoscopes available is that if you were born in the year of the Tiger 2022, it's going to be a tough year for the Tiger. Other animals fare better but if you take a global view, the sages who drew up these horoscopes probably did not dial in the threats we will be facing in 2022.

Having been tasked with predicting what will happen in 2022, what I see is starting to look like a train wreck in slow motion. In as much as I would like to be an optimist, I cannot help but feel fearful of our collective futures. Here are six themes that may play out in the coming year:

1. More Pandemics

Future pandemics could be more lethal than the current Covid series and the existing vaccines could prove less effective against the Omicron virus. Already the opening of country borders worldwide has been delayed as potential lockdowns loom. The conclusion is that the pandemic (or endemic) will be with us throughout 2022 which is a very depressing thought.

2. Climate Change

This will take centre stage in 2022 as Western countries impose stricter ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) compliance on countries wishing to export their products to them. Here in Malaysia, we have seen the effect on our large global exporters – starting with sanctions against plantation companies, glove manufacturers and



more recently, the termination of a major Malaysian supplier by the appliance giant Dyson. Complaints are centred around the harsh treatment of foreign contract workers by these companies. However, ESG compliance does not end there as there are many more areas that could lack governance, and a company's weak sustainability strategies could lead to further loss of markets. In Malaysia, we don't seem to be prepared for this.

3. Global Debt

This is steadily rising and coupled with the end of cheap money and a sharp rise in inflation (not seen

in over two decades), this could also destabilise the global monetary system. A loss of wealth could also severely test a nation's resolve to ride out a storm.

4. The Rise Of The Machine

Artificial intelligence, Virtual Reality, 5G spectrums, robotics, quantum computer chips and super smart phones will transform how we live and work in a world transformed by technology. Countries with an edge in these fields of high technology and those who have invested in educating their young to drive these agendas will dominate.

5. Rising Food Prices

Climate change will lead to crippling droughts or flooding that could lead to a global shortage of food coupled with rising prices unless countries learn to be self-sufficient in their own food production.

6. Corruption

This is on a frightening rise globally. And, unless stopped will lead to political instability signalling an end to our collective prosperity.

A collective response from our leaders is much needed at this time – if we are to have a country that we can all still be proud of. [\[1\]](#)

