



Employment: Unemployment in the UK is at 3.7%, which is a historic low. However, the issue for workers has not been about the risk to their jobs but rather, more about the cost of living. This has been a global issue for many workers.

The economic hangover caused by the global Covid pandemic and the uncertainty over the situation in Russia have disrupted supply chains and caused prices in some markets to soar, as supply of energy and key imports falter.

The Bank of England (BoE) need to control inflation and will raise the interest rate to around 4%. The government's 'minimum service level' bill should curb disruptions during strike actions, but they will not give in on making inflation-busting pay rises if they are to bring inflation down and stabilise the economy.



Sports: Liverpool are having a very poor season. However, they should win the UEFA Champions League.

Arsenal look favourites to win the Premier League, but it will take too much out of them that they will fail to win the FA Cup or the EFL Cup.

English Premier League top-4 2022-23:

- 1 Arsenal
- 2 Manchester City
- 3 Newcastle
- 4 Liverpool



Oscars 2023: After last years 'Slapgate', the Oscars should resume normality but with extra security on Sunday 12 March. Will Smith should have got a nomination for 'Emancipation', but it seems Hollywood is conscious not to reward a 'slapper'!

So, here are the predictions for the winners of key categories:

1. Best Picture: *'The Banshees of Inisherin'*
2. Best Actress: Michelle Yeoh for *'Everything Everywhere All at Once'*
3. Best Actor: Brendan Fraser for *'The Whale'*
4. Best Supporting Actress: Jamie Lee Curtis for *'Everything Everywhere All at Once'*
5. Best Supporting Actor: Brendan Gleeson for *'The Banshees of Inisherin'*
6. Best Director: Daniel Kwan and Daniel Scheinert for *'Everything Everywhere All at Once'*



Money: Don't invest in crypto, don't invest in crypto, **don't** invest in crypto!

Can't say you haven't been warned!

Cryptocurrency remains very volatile. The bankruptcy of FTX led by an unskilled, inexperienced and overhyped Sam Bankman-Fried, demonstrated the industry needs regulation and stability.

Crypto has been a big sham 'n scam. It will continue to lose value and expect a few companies to go down with it.



UK Politics: The Conservatives are in turmoil. Rishi Sunak has inherited a divided party who have had 3 prime ministers in 2022 alone.

Sunak will stable the economy bringing inflation down, but polls will show that the country wants a new government in 2024.

Given the severity of the global climate, it is unlikely Labour will deviate too much away from the Conservative government.



Economy: Over the last 20 years, economists have predicted that China will overtake the US in the global economic superpower charts between 2020 and 2030.

China was on the right path, but its stringent zero-Covid policies has hurt consumer spending and investors retreating, that has led to the economy retracting.

Meanwhile, the US economy has risen to 2.6% due to a more relaxed Covid policy. China has a lot of work to do but should see its economy grow by 5% by the end of the year.



Economy: With UK's inflation running at 10.5% (Dec 2022), the Bank of England (BoE) has quite rightly increased the interest rate to try to bring inflation down.

With gross domestic product (GDP) growth around 0.8%, high interest rates might dampen growth further. Even if you strip out the cost of food and energy, inflation is still well above the BoE's 2% target at around 6%.

Britain must get to grips with inflation. Some might argue the BoE has been too slow to respond and the current interest rate of 3% not high enough.

Interest rate should increase to 4% and inflation should go down to around 6% by the end of the year.

Shahid Miah's

2023

Predictions



Sports: Sir Lewis Hamilton should win his eighth World Championship this year before he spectacularly joins Ferrari to retire.

Max Verstappen (Red Bull) and George Russell (Mercedes) should finish second and third respectively.



Health: The National Health Service (NHS) is part of the fabric of Great Britain, and it is 75 years old. Founded in 1948 by Aneurin Bevan MP under a Labour government, it was the first in the world to offer free healthcare at the point of delivery. It has indeed become the most cherished British institution where everyone is treated based on their need, rather than their ability to pay.

That is a great principle, but the world has changed a lot in the last 75 years. The NHS these days faces significant challenges that includes an aging population, backlogs left by the Covid pandemic, the rising number of patients with complex conditions, and the annual winter pressures. These are not unique challenges to Britain, as a lot of countries are dealing with similar healthcare pressures.

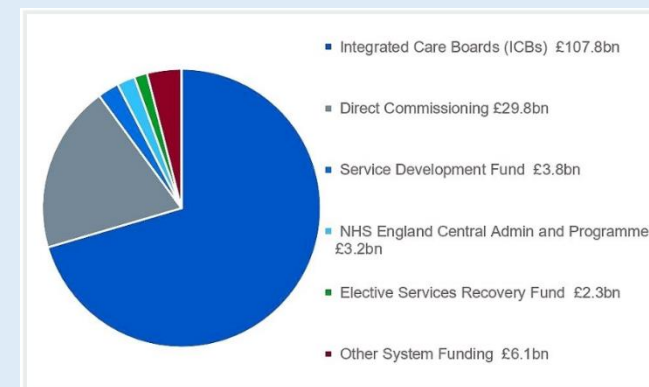
There is no easy quick fix, but more money and more staff are not the solutions.

The NHS is run by different political parties but funded centrally. The government will add an extra £3.3 billion on top of the current funding, which is as follows:

- NHS England (run by the Conservatives): £153 billion
- NHS Scotland (run by the Scottish National Party): £18 billion
- NHS Wales (run by Labour): £10.3 billion
- NHS Northern Ireland (run by the Northern Ireland Executive Committee): £6.5 billion

It is true that nurses, doctors, and ambulance workers are underpaid whilst working unreasonable hours. But the trade unions demanding inflation-busting pay rises coordinated with other public sector unions, was a bad tactic. It would not work and instead increase inflation and destabilise the economy.

The governments in all regions understandably do not want to negotiate pay when there is an independent pay review board. However, given the public sympathy towards healthcare workers, they should come to the table to resolve the issues at hand.



NHS England spend. Source: NHS England

When you take politics out of it, many NHS staff would agree that the NHS needs to reform. This means efficiency and cost savings from:

- Not hiring expensive consultancy firms
- Not paying premium for medicines from pharmaceutical companies
- Not hiring more middle management

Labour has some pragmatic solutions that includes utilising the private sector. It seems sensible, but their biggest challenge would be to fend off critics from their own party.



World Affairs: The war in Ukraine will end with Russia claiming victory.

- Eurozone economy will contract by 0.2% with ECB raising interest rates to 3%
- African economy will grow by 4% with Libya, Niger, and Senegal leading the way
- Japan's GDP will grow by 1.5%, India by 6% and Brazil by 1.5%
- Neither Joe Biden (health) nor Donald Trump (indictment) will run for president



Sports: Novak Djokovic has already won the Australian Open equalling Rafa Nadal's record of 22 Grand Slams. He will go on to win Wimbledon and the US Open, but not the French Open. That would be reserved for Nadal's final tournament.

Towards the end of Serena Williams's career, women's tennis was very open. It will continue but if Naomi Osaka can focus on tennis rather than her social media exploits, she could win Wimbledon and the US Open.



Technology: Some technology experts have predicted Artificial Intelligence (AI) like ChatGPT, which Microsoft has invested billions of dollars into, will replace white-collar workers.

That won't happen anytime soon. We have heard a lot of fearmongering over the years that humans will be replaced in service industries, and it has never happened... yet.