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Views expressed by contributors are their own

Greetings from Japan

Welcome 2025

The Year of the Wood Snake and the first quarter of the 21st century!



In Japan, it's perfectly normal to know your Chinese zodiac sign - it's as common as understanding your blood type, which may surprise people from other countries, but it's just a part of daily life here



The Kanji character for snake



A traditional New Year card



A New Year personal card of a coiled snake

Let's begin with the twelve animals of the Chinese zodiac: Rat, Ox, Tiger, Rabbit, Dragon, Snake, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog and Pig.

Whether you love them or hate them, the Snake is the sixth animal of the twelve-year zodiac cycle, bringing a mix of complexity and mystery to the table.

According to the lunar calendar, every sixty years, a rare event occurs when the Snake aligns with the element of wood. This is why 2025 is referred to as the Year of the Wood Snake.

This coming together of the Snake, known for its wisdom and transforming energy, and wood, which represents growth, stability and creativity, promises a super dynamic year ahead!

Chinese astrology is more complex than the Western zodiac as it revolves around the year of birth rather than the month and each year is associated with an animal.

While some cultures may not see snakes in the best light - maybe thanks to that garden of Eden story - in Chinese astrology, being born under this sign is considered pretty cool.

It is remarkable that the snake, among all living creatures, is uniquely equipped to hear the heartbeat of Mother Earth. I mean, that is incredible. This special connection signifies a time for reflection on the past and an opportunity to move forward with greater awareness and compassion. Furthermore, their ability to shed their old skins represents change and renewal, signaling a perfect time for fresh beginnings.

Overall, the Snake denotes wisdom, knowledge, intelligence, intuition and creativity, bringing luck, prosperity, fertility and longevity. Those born under this sign (1929, 1941, 1953, 1965, 1977, 1989, 2001, 2013) are typically described as wise, charming, mysterious, determined, good at solving problems, deep thinkers and natural-born explorers. They sound great, don't they? However, on the flip side, they can be jealous, suspicious, materialistic, and preoccupied with others' opinion of them.

The Wood Snake, in particular, is seen as charismatic, intelligent and creative, but also secretive, cunning and sometimes ruthless.

What can we expect from The Year of the Wood Snake?

Relationships: It's all about strengthening bonds, deeper communication, understanding and peacefully resolving conflicts. It's also a good time to fall in love.

Finances: Strategic planning and investment are key. Expect slow but steady financial growth.

Creativity: Start new hobbies, hone your artistic skills and tackle challenges with a splash of creative flair inspired by the Wood Snake.

The upcoming Lunar New Year, including the Chinese New Year falls on January 29, symbolises a new beginning.

So, are you all set to shed your old skin, embrace new opportunities, and invite the energy of the Wood Snake into your life in 2025?

Economy

Is it true that the economic situation of Mauritius is not gloomy and is safe, as stated in the Press Release below, issued by the Mouvement Socialiste Militant (MSM)?



COMMUNIQUÉ DE PRESSE

Réserves à Rs. 402 milliards : le MSM accueille positivement les chiffres de la Banque de Maurice.

Le Mouvement Socialiste Militant (MSM) accueille positivement les derniers chiffres publiés par la Banque de Maurice pour l'année 2024.

Selon le communiqué de la Banque de Maurice publié sur son site internet, www.bom.mu, le mardi 7 janvier 2025, les *Gross Official International Reserves* (GOIR) du pays s'élèvent à Rs. 402,7 milliards à fin décembre 2024.

Les réserves du pays ont ainsi augmenté de plus de Rs. 81 milliards, de décembre 2023 à décembre 2024.

Les chiffres officiels de la Banque de Maurice indiquent clairement que l'économie du pays est en bonne santé.

MSM Secretariat

8 janvier 2025

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The Government disagrees with the MSM's verdict on the economy

It could be foresighted that Prime Minister Navin Ramgoolam would not agree with the MSM's interpretation of the Bank of Mauritius's latest data on the economy.

In his dual capacity as Finance Minister, within days of re-stepping into Government House, Prime Minister Ramgoolam produced the State of the Economy report which painted a bleak picture of the finances of the country.

Ramgoolam's State of the Economy report said that Mauritius was bankrupt before he took office. Now his former counterpart, Mr Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, wants the nation to believe that when he (PKJ) managed country prior to the general election, the economy was in good shape, as evidenced by the Bank of Mauritius's communiqué of 7/1/25.

Which is which?

It is said that the economists of the country are debating figures of the Bank of Mauritius. People are a bit at a loss about economists. One of the sayings about these experts is that if you put ten of them in ten separate rooms to study a problem, they come out with ten different opinions and solutions which, each of them, is convinced is right.

Dr Rama Sithanen is a product of the prestigious London School of Economics and Dr Renganaden Padayachy is a product of the equally prestigious Paris Panthéon-Sorbonne University. *Qui pli fort entre ça deux Madras là?* It depends on "who holds the stick?". At the moment, Sithanen holds the stick.

La loi du plus fort prevails!

Nadarajen K. Lingen

Investopedia online extract

Why Can't Economists Agree?

Updated October 20, 2023 - Reviewed by Michael J Boyle

Michael Boyle is an experienced financial professional with more than 10 years working with financial planning, derivatives, equities, fixed income, project management, and analytics.

Celebrated playwright, George Bernard Shaw, once famously quipped: "If all economists were laid end to end, they would not reach a conclusion."

So, how is it that two study and analyze the same data and each comes up with a different forecast for the nation's economy? Why do these experts so often disagree with one another? As we will see, there's no simple answer; there are many reasons for economists' differing opinions.

(Read more on the internet)