

Around The WORLD

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USA

Brain chip trial a success

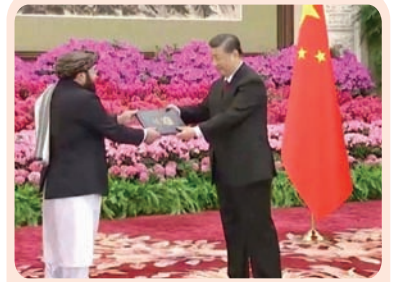
A revolutionary first was accomplished by Elon Musk's Neuralink where a brain-computer interface chip was successfully implanted in a human on January 30. Musk announced the move on X (previously Twitter), saying that the test subject is "recovering well". The invasive surgery was allegedly carried out by a robot, which removed the patient's skull to place 1,024 electrodes on the movement-related area of the brain.



GERMANY

4-day work week on trial

Starting Feb 1, 45 companies began participating in a pilot study to test a four-day work week. A shortage of skilled workers along with rising inflation had encouraged employees to seek increased wages and more flexible timings. Seeking an employer-employee balance, the companies are set to test out the merits of working fewer hours with the same output. The six-month-long programme is going to offer employees one day extra off from the work per week without any pay cuts. Rigorous research will track impacts on employee productivity, wellness, and broader economic growth.



CHINA

Taliban envoy welcomed

On January 30, President Xi Jinping welcomed Taliban's Bilal Karimi as an ambassador to China and accepted his credentials as an envoy from Afghanistan. This move reflects China's motive to include Afghanistan in its Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) as China has declared it wouldn't meddle in Afghanistan's domestic affairs. China declared last year that the Afghan Taliban should not be kept out of the world community and that it must undergo reform to receive full diplomatic recognition. This is the first official acknowledgment of the Taliban government by any nation.



FRANCE

Farmers block the highways

To oppose agricultural policies and high taxes, thousands of farmers have taken to the streets blocking major roads in Paris. Seeking support from the new PM, farmers are seeking relief from low-cost imports, underpayment for produce, and marginalisation due to environmental regulations. To stop the tractors from going into protest towns, the government has deployed over 15,000 officers.



SAUDI ARABIA

WEF meeting in April

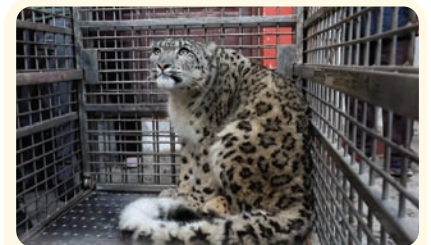
The World Economic Forum summit is scheduled to take place in Saudi Arabia on April 28-29, 2024. To boost the global profile of the kingdom, worldwide cooperation, growth, and energy will be among the primary subjects of discussion. To promote international collaboration and discussion between nations, the event aims to bring together around 700 global leaders from the public and private sectors.



MALAYSIA

17th king crowned

Sultan Ibrahim Iskandar, the ruler of the state of Johor, was sworn in as the 17th king. The 65-year-old monarch will be the first king from Johor since the 1980s. The oath-taking ceremony was held in Kuala Lumpur in the presence of other royal families, PM Anwar Ibrahim, and other lawmakers. Even though the position is merely ceremonial, the Sultan has indicated that he would not waste his five years on the throne as a 'puppet king'.



INDIA

Snow leopard census at 718

The Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India identified the country's snow leopard population to be at 718 after a four-year investigation between 2019 and 2023. Its highest concentration could be found in Ladakh, followed by Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, and Jammu & Kashmir. The survey covered approx 70% of the animal's natural habitat in the trans-Himalayan region.

News Flash

► **Pakistan:** Ex-PM & his wife get 14-year jail term in corruption case ► **Japan:** Moon Lander SLIM regains functionality after nine days ► **Antarctic:** First bird flu death reported in penguins due to H5N1 virus