

International News

Pak. population boom draining economic gain?

Three men who have fathered nearly 100 children among them are doing their bit for Pakistan's rocketing population, which is being counted for the first time in 19 years. But in a country where experts warn the surging populace is gouging into hard-won economic gains and social services, the three patriarchs are unconcerned. Allah, they say, will provide. Pakistan has the highest birth rate in South Asia at around three children per woman, according to the World Bank and government figures, and the census is expected to show that growth remains high. "God has created the entire universe and all human beings, so why should I stop the natural process of a baby's birth?" asks Gulzar Khan, a father of 36, citing one of the strongest influences in the region: the belief that Islam prevents family planning.

magnanimous

very generous or forgiving

scrupulous

diligent, thorough, and extremely careful

Business News

Regional banks may continue to lag without a Washington lift

The S&P 600 index of small cap banks has slid 8.1% in 2017. A rough few months for most U.S. bank stocks has been particularly unkind to regional banks, and that's not likely to change soon as hopes dim for higher long-term interest rates and timely policy relief from Washington. While some investors see bargains in lower valuations of regional banks' shares, few can point with any confidence to near-term catalysts for a turnaround in their fortunes. After outperforming larger banks in the wake of the Nov. 8 U.S. Presidential election, the S&P 600 index of small cap banks is down 8.1% so far this year, data through Thursday showed, while the S&P 500 index of the biggest U.S. banks is unchanged. The full S&P 500, meanwhile, is up 8.7%.

dogmatic

dictatorial, opinionated

placate

make (someone) less angry or hostile

National News

Insurance up for crop loan in Rajasthan

The Rajasthan government has raised the insurance cover by Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 6 lakh for farmers who avail crop loan from cooperative banks in the State, as it aims to bring around 25 lakh peasants under the scheme. The Rajasthan government has raised the insurance amount by Rs. 1 lakh in the present fiscal year in the 'Raj Sahakar Personal Accident Insurance Scheme' targeted to cover more than 25 lakh farmers, a State minister said. Last year, the insurance amount was Rs. 5 lakh and 23.31 lakh farmers were covered under the insurance scheme.

mercurial

subject to sudden or unpredictable changes of mood, temperamental

exacerbate

infuriate, make worse