



Page 2 | NATIONAL
US' Forcible Removal of Chinese Telecom Equipment Only Increases

The Only Solution to The Economic Crisis is Engagement With The Afghan Caretaker Government

In recent years, Afghanistan has faced numerous challenges and crises, severely affecting the lives of its people. Although the...

Page 2 | NATIONAL

Page 3 | ECONOMY
Investment in Afghanistan's Pharmaceutical Sector Reaches \$300 Million: Union



Kabul 8° / 1°

Herat 2° / -9°



Nangarhar 16° / 5°

Balkh 1° / -7°

Heart of Asia

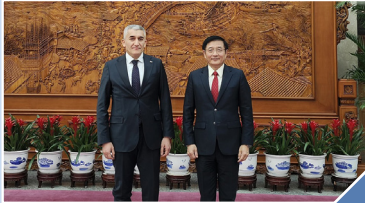
Your Gateway to Afghanistan & the Region

Monday, December 16, 2024

Issue No. 1006

www.heartofasia.af

10 afs



Chinese, Tajik Officials Discuss Afghanistan

China's special envoy for Afghanistan, Yue Xiaoyong, on Friday met with the head of the Department of Strategic Studies of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan, Sharaf Rahimi. Yue Xiaoyong said on X that the two sides had a very good talk on cooperation to help Afghanistan's reconstruction.

Tajikistan's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that during the meeting, the sides underscored the significance of fostering an open dialogue, deepening cooperation at both bilateral and multilateral levels, and sustaining the exchange of views and experiences to promote regional peace... **P2**



EU, Pakistan Address Afghan Refugee Challenges in Joint Meeting

Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced that the 14th Joint Commission meeting between the European Union and Pakistan included discussions on Afghan refugees. According to the ministry's statement, the EU expressed support for sustainable solutions for Afghan refugees residing in Pakistan. The statement added: "The EU reiterated its appreciation for Pakistan's generosity in hosting Afghan refugees over the decades and welcomed the decision to extend the validity of Proof of Registrations cards of Afghan nationals residing in Pakistan until 30 June 2025. The EU also reiterated its support to the Solution Strategy for Afghan Refugees (SSAR), aimed at providing lasting solutions for Afghan refugees and their host communities in neighbouring countries." Meanwhile, German... **P2**

Company Agrees to Invest in Nangarhar's Kama Dam Project



On Saturday, the Ministry of Energy and Water signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with a construction company for investment in the Kama irrigation and power generation dam project in eastern Nangarhar province. The ministry said in a statement that according to the agreement,

the company will invest in the modernization, expansion, and development of the dam's irrigation system. In a separate statement, the ministry also announced the signing of an MoU the Ibn-E-Sina Research and Development Center. Acting Minister of Energy and Water

Abdul Latif Mansoor emphasized at the signing ceremony that the time has come for all Afghans to work towards conducting scientific research and implementing other programs to develop the energy sector in the country. According to the MoU, Ibn-E-Sina Research and Development

Center will cooperate with the Ministry of Energy and Water in establishing energy research centers, providing necessary equipment, training specialized personnel, and providing advice, plans, and proposals for producing, developing, and transmitting electricity.

Afghanistan Seals T20I Series Victory Over Zimbabwe

Afghanistan secured a thrilling three-wicket victory over Zimbabwe on December 14 at Harare Sports Club, clinching the T20I series. After losing the first match, Afghanistan leveled the series with a win in the second game and sealed the victory in this final match.

Opting to bowl first, Afghanistan's bowlers dominated, dismissing Zimbabwe for just 127 runs. Rashid Khan starred with 4 wickets for 27 runs, supported by Mujeeb Ur Rahman's 2 for 20. Brian Bennett was Zimbabwe's top scorer with 31 runs. Chasing 128, Afghanistan struggled early... **P2**



Nimroz Residents Complain About Limited Health Services

Some residents of Nimroz province have expressed concerns about the low quality of services and limited capacity of the provincial hospital in this province.

They say that due to the lack of necessary facilities and capacity in this hospital, patients' problems are not being adequately addressed. Sher Khan, a resident of Nimroz, said: "The service capacity of the provincial hospital in Zaranj city is low, and our patients are not being properly cared for. I urge the officials in the caretaker government to expedite the construction and operationalization of the 100-bed hospital in this province."

Toryalai, another resident of Nimroz, added: "Whenever we have a patient and take them to the provincial hospital, we face many challenges. Traffic congestion and



noise make it difficult to get the patient to the hospital on time. We call on local officials to complete the 100-bed hospital as soon as possible."

Local officials in Nimroz say the construction of the 100-bed hospital has been completed, and with its operations set to begin soon, patients' problems will be resolved. Mohammad Qasim

Khalid, the governor of Nimroz, stated: "The construction of the 100-bed hospital in this province has been completed, and with its operations starting in the near future, patients' issues will be resolved."

The construction of the 100-bed hospital in Nimroz province began in 2018 (1397 in the solar calendar) under the previous... **P2**

EU, Pakistan...

media, citing Croatia's Ministry of Interior, reported that in the first ten months of this year, more than 26,000 undocumented migrants entered the country, many of whom were from Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey, Russia, and Egypt.

One such media outlet wrote: "A total of 26,534 illegal border crossings were recorded in the first 10 months of this year, the press office of Croatia's Interior Ministry told DW, adding that most of these migrants were citizens of Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey, the Russian Federation and Egypt."

Chinese...

and sustainable development.

The consultations were held in a traditionally friendly and constructive atmosphere, with both sides expressing mutual interest in further developing bilateral relations in these areas, according to the statement.

Afghanistan...

falling to 44 for 4. However, a steady 34-run partnership from Azmatullah Omarzai and Mohammad Nabi's 24-run contribution helped Afghanistan recover. With three wickets remaining, Afghanistan reached the target with three balls to spare, securing a hard-fought series win.

Nimroz...

government, but with the return of the Islamic Emirate to power, the project was halted.

This project has since been resumed and is expected to be operational soon.

By: Global Times

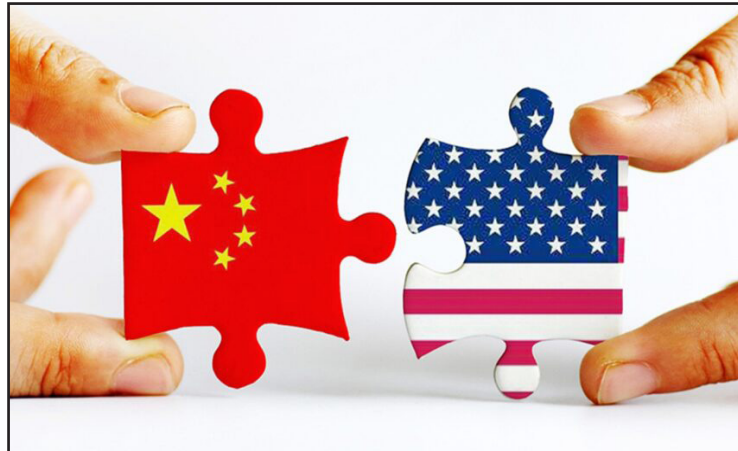
US' Forcible Removal of Chinese Telecom Equipment Only Increases Cost, Harms User Experience: Analyst

A planned House vote to allocate more than \$3 billion to remove Chinese telecom equipment from US networks goes against market logic, and in the end, forcibly removing Chinese companies' equipment will only significantly increase costs for US telecom operators and negatively impact user experience, according to a Chinese analyst.

In fact, as early as 2019, the US Congress required telecom operators receiving federal subsidies to remove Chinese telecom equipment from their networks. In July 2021, the US Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) approved a \$1.9 billion program to rip out and replace equipment from Chinese telecom companies.

Five years later, the US effort is still far from complete, with slow progress, underscoring the considerable challenges faced by American telecom carriers, Ma Jihua, a telecom industry veteran, told the Global Times on Sunday.

Ma said that the main challenge is that telecom equipment is highly systemic and interconnected. "Once these devices are widely adopted by



operators, replacing them requires significant cost increases in various areas, including subsequent maintenance. Forcible removal of these devices would also affect user experience."

Chinese suppliers' equipment is not only very affordable, but also has low maintenance costs, making it highly competitive across the global market. In the US, the primary users of Huawei and ZTE equipment are small operators in rural areas, who face high pressure to control costs. If Washington enforces the removal

of Chinese equipment, many of these companies will have to bear the significantly increased costs, Ma said. Three years after approving \$1.9 billion in funding, the FCC released a report in July stating that about \$3.08 billion would still be needed to replace Chinese telecom equipment. Only about 12 percent of telecom companies have completed the removal of the equipment. "Roughly 64 percent of recipients indicated in their most recent status updates that lack of funding continues to be an obstacle to completing the

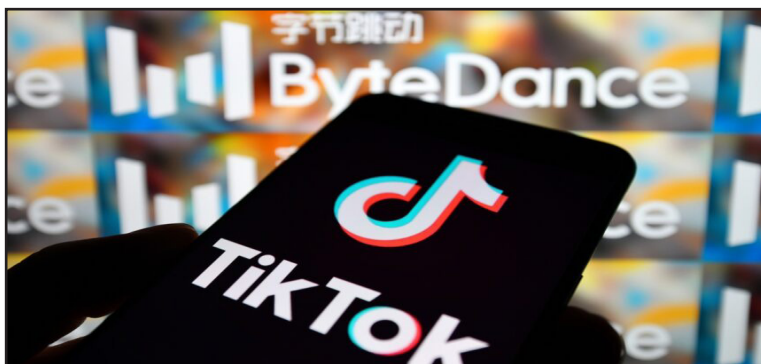
permanent removal, replacement and disposal of the covered communications equipment and services in their networks in their entirety," read the report.

The operators "serve many rural and remote areas of the country where they may be the only mobile broadband service provider, a shutdown of all or part of their networks could eliminate the only provider in some regions," FCC Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel wrote in a letter submitted to the US Congress in May.

Ma noted that the US' years-long crackdown on Chinese telecom companies has not achieved its expected results. Huawei, ZTE and other companies still maintain strong competitiveness in the international market, and even US carriers find it difficult to replace their equipment. The US approach is a form of self-isolation that harms the healthy development of the global telecom industry, Zhang Xiaorong, director of the Beijing-based Cutting-Edge Technology Research Institute, told the Global Times on Sunday.

By: Global Times

TikTok CEO Vows to Take Ban Fight to US Supreme Court, After Court Upholds Law Forcing Sale



TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew vowed to take the fight against a US ban on the popular short video app to the US Supreme Court, after a US federal court on Friday upheld a law requiring its parent company ByteDance to divest its app in the US by January 19, 2025 or face a ban, the Global Times learned from the company on Saturday.

Chew on Friday told the video app's staff that it will try to get the courts to halt the law from going into effect. "Our next step is to seek an injunction of the ban, pending review by the US Supreme Court," Chew wrote in a memo to staff. "While today's news is disappointing, rest assured we will continue the fight to protect free speech on our platform," Chew wrote, according to the company.

US media outlet The Information also reported on the TikTok CEO's vow to take the ban fight to the US Supreme Court and his internal memo to staff. TikTok has stated that it will appeal the case to the US Supreme Court. "The Supreme Court has an established historical record of protecting Americans' right to free speech, and we expect they will do just that on this important constitutional issue. Unfortunately, the TikTok ban was conceived and pushed through based on inaccurate, flawed, and hypothetical information, resulting in outright censorship of the American people," TikTok said in a statement regarding the US appeals court's earlier decision.

The statement further noted that the TikTok ban, unless stopped, will silence the voices of over 170 million Americans here in the US and around

the world on January 19th, 2025.

In April, US President Joe Biden signed into a law that sought to force the sale of TikTok to a US owner or face an effective ban. In May, ByteDance, TikTok and a group of social media influencers filed a lawsuit against the law, arguing the law violates the right to free speech. But on Friday, federal appeals court panel upheld the law, according to media reports. The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) also slammed the US appeals court's decision. "This ruling sets a flawed and dangerous precedent, one that gives the government far too much power to silence Americans' speech online. Banning TikTok blatantly violates the First Amendment rights of millions of Americans who use this app to express themselves and communicate with people around the world," said Patrick Toomey, deputy director of ACLU's National Security Project, according to a statement on its website.

On March 14, 2024, commenting on the US House of Representatives' passing of the legislation that would ask ByteDance to divest TikTok, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said that the bill puts the US on the wrong side of the principles of fair competition and international trade rules.

"If 'national security' can be abused to bring down other countries' competitive companies, there would be no fairness or justice at all. It is sheer robber's logic to try every means to snatch from others all the good things that they have," Wang Wenbin, then Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson, told a regular press conference.

Editorial

The Only Solution to The Economic Crisis is Engagement With The Afghan Caretaker Government

In recent years, Afghanistan has faced numerous challenges and crises, severely affecting the lives of its people. Although the international community reduced its assistance following various political and social changes in Afghanistan, this action has only exacerbated the struggles of Afghans and worsened the country's economic situation.

In the current context, it is essential for the international community to continue its engagement with the Afghan caretaker government, resolve issues through dialogue, and take meaningful steps toward unfreezing Afghanistan's frozen assets. It must be recognized that freezing these funds has only increased economic hardships, pushing unemployment and poverty rates to unprecedented levels.

Afghanistan's economy has long depended on international aid, and the cessation of such assistance has posed a severe threat to the lives of millions of Afghans. Rising unemployment, soaring food prices, and limited access to healthcare have made life increasingly difficult for the people. Therefore, releasing Afghanistan's frozen assets would bring significant improvements to the country's economic condition. The international community must engage with the Afghan caretaker government during this critical period to support the country's economic development. Expanding economic cooperation can improve Afghans' living standards and gradually reduce unemployment. Facilitating international trade, encouraging investment in agriculture, energy,

and infrastructure sectors, and supporting Afghan entrepreneurs are key strategies to revitalize Afghanistan's economy.

The Afghan caretaker government also has a responsibility to comply with international standards, engage positively with the global community, establish transparent governance, and take serious steps toward social and economic development. This will build trust with the international community and open a new chapter of assistance and cooperation.

In these sensitive times, resolving issues through dialogue and unfreezing Afghanistan's assets would be a fundamental step toward the country's economic recovery and progress. The international community must understand that Afghanistan's problems can only be... **P3**

Investment in Afghanistan's Pharmaceutical Sector Reaches \$300 Million: Union

Officials from the Union of Pharmaceutical Factories report that since the re-establishment of the Islamic Emirate, investment in Afghanistan's pharmaceutical sector has surged to \$300 million.

Ahmad Saeed Shams, the union's head, highlighted that 980 different medicines are now produced domestically, with this number steadily increasing.

Shams further stated that Afghanistan has achieved self-sufficiency in 15 key medicines. However, some union members have urged the government to foster further growth in the pharmaceutical industry, emphasizing the need

for measures to curb market monopolies and promote medicine production and export.

"Afghanistan should aim for complete self-sufficiency in pharmaceuticals and begin exporting to other countries," said Kamaluddin Kakar, a union member. Meanwhile, Abdulsalam Jawad Akhundzadah, spokesman for the Ministry of Industry and Commerce, affirmed the ministry's commitment to supporting domestic production and investment.

He encouraged investors to share any challenges they face, assuring that the ministry provides full support to both local and foreign



investors looking to invest in Afghanistan.

Private sector representatives also called on government institutions

to prioritize domestic products in public contracts to help stimulate further growth in the country's production and investment sectors.

The Only Solution...

Solved through engagement, while leaving the country isolated would only prolong its suffering. A unified, cooperative, and trust-based approach is essential to save Afghanistan's future from the ongoing economic crisis.

Building trust between the international community and the Afghan caretaker government is crucial. Through mutual respect and economic cooperation, we can improve the lives of Afghans and advance toward a more prosperous and stable Afghanistan. Joint efforts are indispensable for resolving political and economic challenges.

Syria's...

stage is reconstruction and stability, not being drawn into disputes that could lead to further destruction." He also said diplomatic solutions were the only way to ensure security and stability and that "uncalculated military adventures" were not wanted.

On Russia, whose military intervention almost a decade ago helped tip the balance in Assad's favour and which gave asylum to the ousted leader earlier this week, Sharaa said that its relations with Syria should serve common interests.

"The current stage requires careful management of international relations," he added.

Blinken Says...

Speaking at a news conference in Aqaba, Jordan, Blinken would not discuss details of the contacts but said it was important for the U.S. to convey messages to the group about its conduct and how it intends to govern in a transition period.

Ukraine Strikes...

Oryol Gov. Andrey Klychkov confirmed that a Ukrainian drone strike set fire to a fuel depot. He said later the blaze had been contained and that there were no casualties.

Russia's Defense Ministry on Saturday claimed its forces shot down 37 Ukrainian drones over the country's south and west the previous night. The

Ukrainian strikes came a day after Russia fired 93 cruise and ballistic missiles and almost 200 drones at its neighbor, further battering Ukraine's energy infrastructure, around half of which has been destroyed during the war. Rolling electricity blackouts are common and widespread, and Zelenskyy charged Friday that Moscow is "terrorizing

millions of people" with such assaults.

According to Ukraine's air force, Russia kept up its drone attacks on Saturday, launching 132 across Ukrainian territory. Fifty-eight drones were shot down and a further 72 veered off course, likely due to electronic jamming, it said.

Acting Health Minister: Most Central Hospitals Lack Equipment



Speaking during the electronic examination program for 450 positions in the Ministry of Public Health, acting Minister Noor Jalal Jalali acknowledged that the country's healthcare system is currently facing numerous challenges.

During the event, Noor Jalal Jalali stated that efforts are underway to resolve these challenges as quickly as possible.

He said: "We have 21 tertiary hospitals in the center, and except for one, the equipment in the rest of these hospitals is nonexistent. Access to healthcare services is the right of the nation, and we are working hard in this regard."

The acting minister also pledged that the examination

process would be conducted transparently.

The competitive examination for 450 positions in the Ministry of Public Health was organized by the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission, with over 3,500 participants taking part.

Shahzada Noor Rashid, the General Director of Administrative Reform and Civil Service, assured participants: "We guarantee everyone here that there will be no fraud. Our computerized system ensures complete transparency."

Saifuddin Tayeb, Deputy of the General Directorate of Administrative Affairs, said during the program that the directorate has institutes

to improve the capacity of employees. He said: "The Administrative Affairs Directorate has two capacity-building processes to train and educate employees of the Islamic Emirate." Despite assurances from officials about the transparency of the examination process, some participants called for even greater transparency.

Wares, one of the participants, said: "Our request to the Islamic Emirate, especially the Ministry of Public Health, is to prioritize recruiting professional individuals." According to officials from the Ministry of Public Health, another 8,500 positions in various medical fields will be opened for competition in the future.

Exchange Rates

70.2875	\$	70.0875
74.3293	€	73.7493
78.0971	£	77.5933
251.4	Rp	243.4
19.1295	درهم	19.0595
789.5	₹	779.5

Contact Numbers

Kabul Police -119

Kabul Ambulance - 112

Wazir Akbar Khan Hospital

0202301360

Ata Turk Hospital

0202500312

Corona call center - 166



if You Can Think It,
We Can ink it.

OFFSET PRINTING

- Business Card
- Books
- Letterheads
- Magazines
- Newspapers
- File Folders
- Brochure
- Flyers
- Calendars
- Posters
- other...

+93 77 55 22 677
+93 782 98 9696

+93 202512626

Dehbori Crossroads in
Front of Park Kabul

waygalprinting.co@gmail.com

Heart of Asia

Chief Editor: Naweed Omar

Reporters: Safiullah Nasary, Feroz Ahmadi,
Najeeb Karimi, Ezatullah Ahmadzai, Jawad
Temori & Hameedullah Hamidi

Design By: Haseeb Ur Rahman Sahel

Phone: +93-202502100 - +93-777989696

Website: www.heartofasia.af

Email: heartofasiadaily@gmail.com

Address: Behind Rahman Baba High School

- Opposite to 3rd District,

Kabul - Afghanistan

Print: Waygal Printing .Co - +93 - 202512626

Syria's De Facto Leader Not Interested in New Conflicts Despite Israeli Attacks

Syria's de facto leader, Ahmad al-Sharaa said on Saturday Israel is using false pretexts to justify its attacks on Syria, but that he is not interested in engaging in new conflicts as the country focuses on rebuilding following the end of Bashar al-Assad's reign.

Sharaa - better known as Abu Mohammed al-Golani - leads the Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) group that swept Assad from power last week, ending the family's five-decade iron-fisted rule. Israel has since moved into a demilitarised zone inside Syria created after the 1973 Arab-Israeli war, including the Syrian side of the strategic Mount Hermon that overlooks Damascus, where it took over an abandoned Syrian military post.

Israel, which has said that it does not intend to stay there and calls the incursion into Syrian



territory a limited and temporary measure to ensure border security, has also carried out hundreds of strikes on Syria's strategic weapons stockpiles.

Several Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Jordan, condemned what they called Israel's seizure of a buffer zone in the Golan Heights.

"Israeli arguments have become weak and no longer justify their recent violations. The Israelis have clearly crossed the lines of engagement in Syria, which poses a threat of unwarranted escalation in the region," Sharaa said in an interview published on the website of Syria TV, a pro-opposition channel.

"Syria's war-weary condition, after years of conflict and war, does not allow for new confrontations. The priority at this... **P3**

A look at the world

Hugs, Angst on Streets of Seoul Following Dramatic Impeachment Vote of President Yoon

In the chilly and windy December afternoon in the South Korean capital Seoul, crowds of angry people were gathered in front of the country's parliament to witness a vote on the second impeachment motion against President Yoon Suk-yeol.

As the clock struck noon, a sea of residents, undeterred by the biting December winds, congregated before the parliament's main gate, brandishing placards that boldly proclaimed "Yoon Suk-yeol Out!" and "Arrest the Mastermind of Chaos, Yoon Suk-yeol!" demanding his immediate step-down. The crowd, a tapestry woven from all walks of life, swelled as the day progressed, transforming the roads in front of the parliament into a kaleidoscope of colors and chants. Young adults in their 20s or 30s, armed with glowing batons, ingeniously wove impeachment slogans into the melodies of K-pop hits, momentarily converting the protest venue into a vibrant, open-air concert. Police estimated that more than 200,000 people attended the gathering.

At about 16:00 local time, the vote on the second impeachment motion began. Unlike boycotting the first vote, the ruling party, which opted to oppose the impeachment, allowed its lawmakers to participate and vote freely this time. As a result, the entire contingent of 300 lawmakers of the unicameral National Assembly attending the historic plenary session cast their votes. The voting process was conducted by secret ballot, with parliament members marking the white voting paper in turn and placing it in the ballot box.



Blinken Says Officials Have Been in Direct Contact With The Syrian Rebel Group That Ousted Assad

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Saturday that American officials have been in direct contact with the Syrian rebel group that spearheaded the overthrow of President Bashar Assad's government but is designated a foreign terrorist organization by the United States



and others.

Blinken is the first U.S. official to publicly confirm contacts between the Biden administration and Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, or HTS, which led a coalition of armed opposition groups that ousted Assad from power last Sunday... **P3**

Ukraine Strikes Southern Russia With Drones As Kyiv Reels From Consecutive Aerial Attacks



Ukrainian drone strikes on southern Russia killed a 9-year-old boy and set fire to a major oil terminal, officials said Saturday, the day after Moscow launched a massive aerial attack on its neighbor that Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said was one of the heaviest bombardments of the country's energy sector in the nearly three-year war. The boy died when a drone struck his family's home outside Belgorod, a Russian city near the border with Ukraine, local Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov reported on Saturday morning on the Telegram messaging app. His mother and 7-month-old sister were hospitalized with injuries, Gladkov said.

He posted photos of what he said was the aftermath of the attack, showing a low-rise house with gaping holes in its roof and front wall flanked by mounds of rubble. Elsewhere in southern Russia, Ukrainian drones overnight hit a major oil terminal in the Oryol region, sparking a blaze, Ukraine's General Staff reported. Photos published by the General Staff and on Russian Telegram news channels showed huge plumes of smoke engulfing the facility, backlit by an orange glow... **P3**

Aksos
Aksos Book Store
Add a Book to Your Life!

dehbori Crossroads in front of park Kabul, Afghanistan.
0202504652-0798989696
aksosbookstore@gmail.com
www.aksosbookstore.af
Aksos Book Store