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Bill to ban NDAs during legislative discussions fails

BY NICOLE NIXON
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A bill to restrict the use of nondisclosure agreements in negotiations over legislation

failed to advance from a committee on Thursday without support from Democrats.

Asm. Vince Fong, R-Bakersfield, introduced the bill following reports that NDAs were used in talks that led to a

2023 deal to provide fast food workers a \$20 an hour minimum wage.

Asm. Gail Pellerin, D-Santa Cruz, who chairs the Assembly Elections Committee, said it is "a complicated issue" and dis-

cussions were "hampered by the fact that the author waited to amend this bill" until a week before a key legislative deadline.

"This rushed process ... prevented this bill from receiving

the level of scrutiny and analysis that bills normally receive before being heard," Pellerin said before casting a vote against the bill.

Fong often criticizes Democrats for passing bills - especially hefty budget legislation - with little time for review and debate. He acknowledged his bill came late but said he had requested the amendments in early March, after the issue became public.

Other Democrats on the committee abstained from voting on

SEE BILL, 4A



JEFFERSON SIEGEL NYT

Former President Donald Trump raises a fist outside the courtroom as he returns from lunch Thursday in his criminal trial at Manhattan Criminal Court in Manhattan.

Ukraine detains first minister in crackdown on graft

BY VOLODYMYR VERBIANYI
Bloomberg News

Ukraine's agriculture minister became the first cabinet member under Volodymyr Zelenskyy's presidency to be detained in a crackdown on corruption demanded by allies as a condition for aid in Kyiv's war against Russia.

The High Anti-Corruption Court in Kyiv ordered Mykola Solskyi, who has overseen Ukraine's grain-export policy during the conflict, to be taken into custody early Friday, the court said on its website. The minister, who submitted his resignation even as he denied wrongdoing, was released after paying \$1.9 million, according to a ministry statement.

Before he became Ukraine's wartime leader, Zelenskyy was propelled to office in 2019 on a pledge to root out endemic corruption that eroded Ukraine's economy for three decades since the Soviet Union collapsed. Moscow's invasion has made the issue more urgent as international donors have demanded progress while they dispatch billions to keep the war-battered economy afloat and provide weapons to the frontline.

Bolstering anti-corruption efforts and reducing oligarchs' control over the economy is a central issue for lenders including the International Monetary Fund but also the European Union, which opened accession talks with Kyiv at the end of last year.

SEE UKRAINE, 4A

Tabloid publisher defiant under Trump lawyer's questioning

BY JESSE MCKINLEY AND JONAH E. BROMWICH
NYT News Service

NEW YORK
The first week of testimony in the criminal trial of Donald Trump wound down Friday with intense questioning of the prosecution's inaugural witness about his efforts before the 2016 presidential election to hide salacious stories about the

Republican candidate.

The witness, David Pecker, who has known the former president for decades, faced a stern cross-examination from Trump's defense lawyer, Emil Bove. Bove pressed Pecker on two deals he struck in 2015 and 2016 with two people who had been seeking to sell tales about Trump. Those stories were then buried, a scheme described by prosecutors as "catch and kill."

In a tense moment midmorning, Bove worked to undermine previous testimony from Pecker that Trump had thanked him after the election for helping to derail one such account.

Bove, a former federal prosecutor, pushed Pecker to explain a seeming discrepancy between a 2018 interview with the FBI - which did not note the supposed thanks from Trump - and his testimony this week.

Pecker, a former tabloid titan who was once the publisher of The National Enquirer, resisted the implication that there was a contradiction, but eventually acknowledged the inconsistency. Still, he remained defiant, saying that he had been honest on the stand.

"I know what the truth is," Pecker said, suggesting that FBI

SEE TRUMP, 4A

Charles to return to public duties after cancer disclosure

BY MARK LANDLER
NYT News Service

LONDON
King Charles III will return to public duties next week, Buckingham Palace announced Friday, an encouraging sign of his recovery nearly three months after he disclosed that he had cancer, and a palpable relief to a country anxious about another

wrenching change in the British monarchy.

Charles and his wife, Queen Camilla, will mark his return with a visit to a cancer center Tuesday, where they will meet with patients and staff, the palace said. He will appear at other engagements later, not least welcoming Emperor Naruhito of Japan, and his wife, Empress Masako, for a state visit in June.

The palace did not offer specific updates on Charles' medical treatment, condition or prognosis, in keeping with its policy of sharing some - but not all - details about his illness. Yet in the opaque world of the royal family, the busyness of a monarch's calendar is often the best clue to his well-being.

The news offers a ray of hope

SEE CHARLES, 4A



DOUG PETERS Sipa USA

King Charles and Queen Camilla attend the Easter service at St George's Chapel at Windsor Castle on March 31. It was Charles' first public appearance since he disclosed that he had cancer.



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