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BREAKING NEWS AT CHICAGOTRIBUNE.COM

Trump's attacks could aid Russia

After his conviction, ex-president gives more ammo to autocrats

By Emma Burrows
Associated Press

After his historic guilty verdict in his hush money case, former President Donald Trump attacked the U.S. criminal justice system, making unfounded claims of a

"rigged" trial that echoed remarks from the Kremlin.

"If they can do this to me, they can do this to anyone," Trump said Friday, speaking from his namesake tower in New York. Thousands of miles away, Russian President Vladimir Putin was probably "rubbing his hands with glee," said Fiona Hill, a former senior White House national security adviser to three U.S. presidents, including Trump.

Hill and other analysts say Trump's attacks could be useful to Putin and other autocrats as they look to boost their standing among their own citizens, potentially sway the upcoming U.S. presidential election in which Trump is the presumptive GOP nominee and undermine the United States' global influence.

Some autocratic countries reacted swiftly in support of Trump.

Moscow agreed with Trump's assessment of Thursday's verdict, calling it the "elimination of political rivals by all possible legal or illegal means," Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said. In September, Putin said the prosecution of Trump was political revenge that "shows the rottenness of the American political system."

After the verdict, Hungary's populist, pro-Russia prime minister, Viktor Orban, called Trump a

"man of honor" and urged him to "keep on fighting."

China's state-owned Global Times newspaper suggested Trump's conviction adds to the "farical nature" of this year's U.S. presidential election, adding that it will aggravate political extremism and end in "more chaos and social unrest."

Putin is especially likely to see

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Brewery reflects Pilsen's evolution

Marks Latinos' growing economic power, celebrates community

By Laura Rodríguez Presa and Ahmed Ali Akbar
Chicago Tribune

Enrique Rivera lived in Pilsen long before Time Out magazine named 18th Street one of the "Coolest Streets in the World" earlier this year. He was there decades before the upscale restaurants and walking tours around the neighborhood and before the luxury houses and condominiums brought thousands of new faces to the area, displacing many of its working-class immigrant population.

The Pilsen neighborhood that Rivera grew up in was plagued by street violence but deeply rich in muralism and immigrant-owned shops that shaped its strong Mexican identity.

Despite the recent changes, nothing erodes the fabric of the community that has been woven over generations, including his, Rivera said. He and his family still live in the same house that his parents bought when they moved to Pilsen from Mexico in 1961.

He loved Pilsen then and he loves Pilsen now, he said. So when the opportunity came to open a business in the area, he took it.

Earlier this month Rivera and a group of friends-turned-business partners celebrated the grand opening of Monochrome Brewing. The new brewery, at 2101 S. Carpenter St., breathes fresh life into the space once occupied

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JOHN J. KIM/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Tim McGraw makes it look all too easy

In United Center show, country legend leans into a relatable and modest approach that endears him to the audience. **Arts & Living**

Sox lose 11th straight as tempers flare

Tommy Pham was restrained by teammates after a testy exchange that followed a play at the plate in another Sox loss. **Chicago Sports**



EILEEN T. MESLAR/CHICAGO TRIBUNE

MEXICAN PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Casting their votes from Chicago

Silbia de Leon cheers outside the Mexican Consulate in Chicago after voting in the Mexican presidential election on Sunday. Mexico is expected to elect its first woman president in the election between center-right Xóchitl Gálvez and left-wing Claudia Sheinbaum.

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Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson joins Asian American politicians at a Lunar New Year celebration at City Hall on Feb. 20. **CHRIS SWEDA/CHICAGO TRIBUNE**

Asian Americans strive for more political power as numbers grow

Defining diversity can become issue across city, state

By Alice Yin
Chicago Tribune

The lobby of City Hall was awash in crimson and gold as Mayor Brandon Johnson and a small group of local Asian American politicians convened for a Lunar New Year celebration.

Flanked by a cadre of young, bedazzled Chinese lion dancers, Johnson attempted to honor Ald. Nicole Lee for being the first Asian American to represent Chicago's 11th Ward. But Lee, also the City Council's first alderman of Chinese descent, was soon wincing at how he described her Near South Side community — the city's first Asian-majority ward.

"We're a city that can elect an Asian American woman to

a ward that has been known for its racism," Johnson declared to the crowd. "But it tells you what's possible in the city."

Johnson later told the Tribune he had been nodding to Chicago's "harsh reality" of deep segregation, and "it's incumbent upon all of us in this city to address racism that exists around the city."

He did not elaborate on his reference to the 11th Ward,

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Piping plovers making history

Captive-reared birds have nests with eggs in Waukegan and Chicago

By Sheryl DeVore

Captive-reared piping plovers are making history as they guard two separate nests with eggs in Waukegan and Chicago.

Three plover eggs were documented Saturday in Waukegan, and 30 miles down the Lake Michigan shoreline, another egg was confirmed at Montrose Beach.

"This is an historic event for the Great Lakes Piping Plover Project," said Brad Semel, endangered species recovery specialist for the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

Three of the four parents-to-be, Blaze, Pepper and Searocket, hatched in a captive-rearing facility in Michigan last summer. They were released as chicks near Montrose Beach and Illinois Beach State Park in Zion last July, and have returned from their southerly wintering locations to start families.

The fourth plover is Imani, born

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