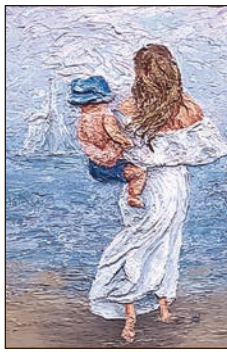
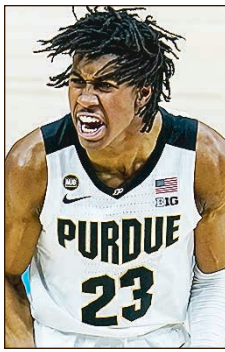


Steuben Arts
Scene plans
1st art show
**WEEKENDER,
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**Purdue's
Ivey to enter
NBA draft**



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Rokita advises on virus liability

Says schools not
'generally' at fault

NIKI KELLY
The Journal Gazette

INDIANAPOLIS – Attorney General Todd Rokita issued an advisory opinion Thursday saying schools aren't "generally liable for damages related to COVID-19," though he couldn't rule it out altogether.

The opinion was sought several months ago by state Rep. Dave Abbott, R-Rome City. Rokita had been approached by several area school districts that were moving away from masks, quarantine and contract tracing requirements.

"They were trying to get kids back in school due to the detrimental affects, and they didn't want to get sued," he said.

Several local districts stopped following state guidance on the items before state health officials downgraded the recommendations.

Abbott said, ultimately, the issue resolved itself, but Rokita's office went ahead

Rokita, Page 6A

SEE ALSO

■ Lawsuit filed against NACS over COVID-19 policies has narrowed
Metro, Page 1C

Dancing with the Stars at North Side



Mike Moore | The Journal Gazette

Students and teachers at North Side High School rehearse onstage Thursday evening for the school's annual Dancing with the Stars fundraiser. The event, at 5:30 p.m. today, pairs Dance V students with school staff members in dances of all styles. Tickets are \$2 and are available at the door. All proceeds go to Riley Children's Foundation.

Girl struck near school

Injuries minor; boy
hurt badly at same
corner 3 months ago

ASHLEY SLOBODA
The Journal Gazette

An 11-year-old girl was expected to be OK after a vehicle struck her Thursday near her school in northeast Fort Wayne, officials said.

The collision marked the second time in about three months that a Blackhawk Middle School student walking to school suffered injuries at State Boulevard and Arrowwood/Busche Drive. The intersection is staffed with a crossing guard, said Krista Stockman, Fort Wayne Community Schools spokeswoman.

Stockman said it's unusual for students to get hurt by cars, especially two in the same location.

"It is a concern," she said.

FWCS has been working with city traffic engineers on a school zone review of State Boulevard between Arrowwood/Busche Drive and Maysville Road, an area that also includes Blackhawk Christian School, Stockman said. The review considers traffic patterns, crosswalks, lighting and signage.

Thursday's accident happened just before 7 a.m. Stockman said at least one car was stopped at the crosswalk to let students cross, and another vehicle proceeded, striking the sixth grader.

The child suffered minor injuries, complaining of pain to her side, said Detective Paul Meitz of the Fort Wayne Police Department. He said the girl was taken to a hospital for an assessment and was expected to be OK.

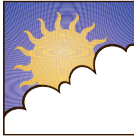
The driver stopped immediately

Struck, Page 6A

INSIDE

WEATHER

Partly cloudy



Breezy. High in the mid-40s.
**FORECAST,
PAGE 2A**

WEEKENDER

Concert series set

Embassy Theatre announces its Summer Nights lineup

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Russian forces leave Chernobyl

Ukraine says Moscow trying
to regroup for new attacks

ASSOCIATED PRESS

KYIV, Ukraine – Russian troops handed control of the Chernobyl nuclear power plant back to the Ukrainians and left the heavily contaminated site early today, more than a month after taking it over, Ukrainian authorities said, as fighting raged on the outskirts of Kyiv and other fronts.

Ukraine's state power company, Energoatom, said the pullout at Chernobyl came after Russian soldiers received "significant doses" of radiation from digging trenches in the forest in the exclusion zone around the closed plant. But there was no independent confirmation of that.

The withdrawal took place amid growing indications the Kremlin is using talk of de-escalation in Ukraine as cover while regrouping, resupplying its forces and redeploying them for



Associated Press

Ukrainian servicemen ride on an armored transporter Thursday after retaking a Russian position outside Kyiv.

a stepped-up offensive in the eastern part of the country.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said Russian withdrawals from the north and

center of the country were just a military tactic and that the forces are building up for new powerful attacks in the southeast.

"We know their intentions," Zelenskyy said in his nightly video address to the nation. "We know that they are moving away from those areas where we hit them in order to focus on other, very important ones where it may be difficult for us."

"There will be battles ahead," he added.

Meanwhile, a convoy of 45 buses headed to Mariupol in another bid to evacuate people from the besieged port city after the Russian military agreed to a limited cease-fire in the area. But Russian forces blocked the buses, and only 631 people were able to get out of the city in private cars, according to the Ukrainian government.

Twelve Ukrainian trucks were able to deliver humanitarian supplies to Mariupol, but they were all seized by Russian troops, Deputy Prime Minister Iryna Vereshchuk said late Thursday.

Ukraine, Page 6A

Biden says oil release essential to cut prices

To tap stockpile daily
to help boost supply

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON – President Joe Biden on Thursday ordered the release of 1 million barrels of oil per day from the nation's strategic petroleum reserve for six months, a bid to control energy prices that have spiked after the United States and allies imposed steep sanctions on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine.

The president said it was not known how much gasoline prices

could decline as a result of his move, but he suggested it might be "anything from 10 cents to 35 cents a gallon." Gas is averaging about \$4.23 a gallon, compared with \$2.87 a year ago, according to AAA.

"The bottom line is if we want lower gas prices, we need to have more oil supply right now," Biden said. "This is a moment of consequence and peril for the world, and pain at the pump for American families."

The president also wants Congress to impose financial penalties on oil and gas companies that lease



A man checks gas prices at a gas station in Buffalo Grove, Ill., last week. President Joe Biden plans to draw on the nation's strategic petroleum reserve to combat high gas prices.

Associated Press

Oil, Page 6A