

# ★ PM ahead of rival in Israeli election

The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu appeared to be headed toward re-election early Wednesday, as exit polls and partial results showed him edging ahead of his main competitor in a tight race that was seen as a referendum on the long-serving leader.

Both Netanyahu and former military chief Benny Gantz, leader of the rival Blue and White party, declared victory in speeches to boisterous gatherings of supporters. But as the night went on, there were growing signs that Netanyahu's Likud was pulling ahead.

With a victory, Netanyahu would capture a fourth consecutive term and fifth overall, which this summer will make him Israel's longest-ever serving leader. Perhaps more crucially, re-election will give him a boost as he braces for the likelihood of criminal charges in a series of corruption scandals.

The 69-year-old prime minister has been the dominant force in Israeli politics for the past two decades and its face to the world. His campaign has focused heavily on his friendship with President Donald Trump and his success in cultivating new allies, such as China, India and Brazil.

But the corruption scandals created some voter fatigue. Along with two other former military chiefs on his ticket, Gantz challenged Netanyahu on security issues, normally the prime minister's strong suit, while also taking aim at the prime minister's alleged ethical lapses.

Israel's attorney general has recommended charging Netanyahu with bribery, breach of trust and fraud. The telegenic Gantz, who has been vague on key policy fronts, has presented himself as a clean, scandal-free alternative to Netanyahu.

Initial exit poll results by Israel's main TV stations showed the two parties far ahead of all of the other competitors in the race and indicated that Blue and White would emerge as the largest party.

"Elections have losers and elections have winners. And we are the winners," Gantz told a vic-



An Israeli Arab citizen from Taiybe town votes with her son. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later appeared to be headed to victory.

tory rally shortly after midnight.

He vowed to change the tone of Israel's divisive political system and "be the prime minister of everyone, not just the ones who voted for me."

But as results trickled in throughout the night, the Likud appeared to be gaining strength. With over 90 percent of the votes counted, Likud held a narrow lead over Blue and White, with Netanyahu's parties expected to take 37 seats — one more than Gantz.

Though both parties were well short of a majority in the 120-seat parliament, the polls showed Likud and its religious and nationalist allies controlling a solid majority.

"It's a night of tremendous victory," Netanyahu told his victory rally. "I was very moved that the nation of Israel once again entrusted me for the fifth time, and with an even greater trust."

He said he had already begun talking to fellow right wing and religious parties about forming a new coalition.

"I want to make it clear, it will be a right-wing government, but I intend to be the prime minister of all Israeli citizens, right or left, Jews and

non-Jews alike," he said.

The message was a sharp contrast from his campaign theme in which he accused Gantz of conspiring with Arab parties to topple him. Arab leaders accused Netanyahu of demonizing the country's Arab community, which is about 20 percent of the population.

His attacks on the Arab sector fueled calls for a boycott, and appeared to result in relatively low turnout by Arab voters. Israel's central elections commission banned parties from bringing cameras into polling stations after Likud party activists were caught with hidden cameras in Arab towns.

The final results are subject to change. Some 40 parties took part in the election, and only those that receive at least 3.25 percent of the votes make it into parliament.

The final results will depend on the performance of several small parties, including the Arab Balad party and the ultranationalist "New Right," that were on the cusp of entering parliament. If any of them fail to cross the threshold, the makeup of the next coalition could be dramatically affected.

# DE BLASIO

## Parts of NYC affected amid measles outbreak; LI on alert for illness signs

BY DELTHIA RICKS

delthia.ricks@newsday.com

### EDITORIAL

NYC's outbreak a warning for LI **A22**

Mayor Bill de Blasio declared a public health emergency for parts of New York City on Tuesday in the midst of an expanding measles outbreak, and doctors and public health officials on Long Island asserted they're on the lookout for signs of the respiratory illness.

"Everybody has been on heightened alert," said Dr. Bruce Farber, chief of infectious diseases for the Northwell Health system, which has major medical centers in Nassau and Suffolk counties.

"It's really sad when you see an infection that can be prevented by a vaccine spreading again," Farber said.

Measles is one of the most infectious viruses known to medicine — and it spreads like wildfire, Farber and other infectious disease experts said.

His colleague, Dr. Eric Cioe-Penã, director of global health for the health care system, said if one person with measles coughed in a room

and someone entered two hours later, there is close to 100 percent certainty the late-comer would get infected.

Measles has spread through several Brooklyn-area schools in an outbreak that has affected more than 200 students. No end to the epidemic is yet in sight.

Long Island so far has remained measles-free, public health officials said Tuesday, crediting a high vaccination rate in both counties.

Data from the State Department of Health show the last confirmed instances of measles in Nassau were in 2013, when two cases were traced to exposures outside the country. A Suffolk County infant, also exposed to measles abroad, was treated in 2017 at Good Samaritan Hospital in West Islip.

As part of his state of emergency, de Blasio is requiring

## New push to end

BY YANCEY ROY

yancey.roy@newsday.com

ALBANY — New York lawmakers say there is a new urgency to approve pro-vaccination legislation in the wake of measles outbreaks in the Hudson Valley and Brooklyn.

One proposal would end exemptions for childhood vaccinations based on nonmedical — often religious — reasons. Another would allow minors who are 14 years and older to get vaccinated without the need for parental approval.

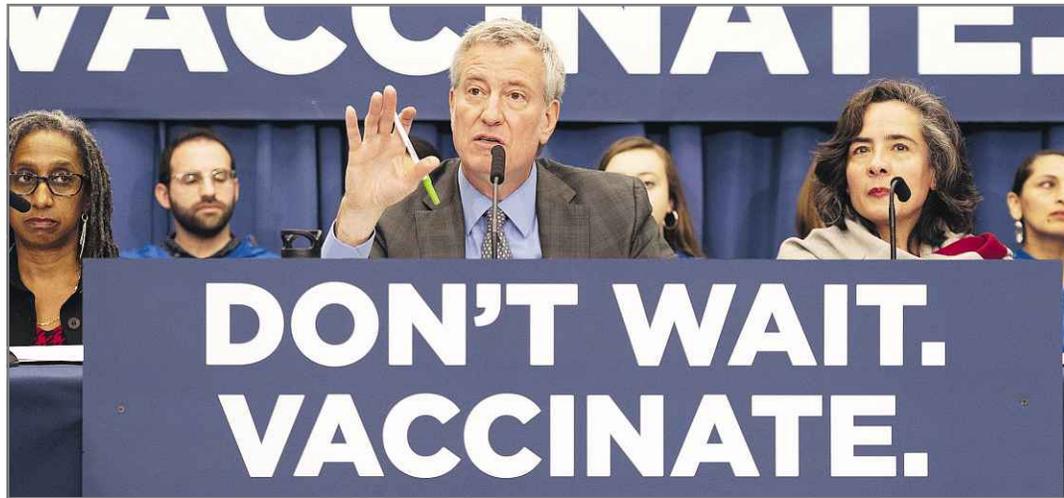
Backers said measles has spread because of disinformation about vaccines and exploitation of a provision in state law that allows people to forgo vaccinations for religious reasons.

"We kind of had measles eradicated. Now it's back," said Sen. Kevin Thomas (D-Levittown), co-sponsor of the bill to end nonmedical exceptions. "People are abusing this religious exemption ... Anyone who has a philosophical difference (regarding vaccinations) can use it to refuse to vaccinate their children."

It is unclear whether the pro-vaccination bills will win approval before the state legislative session ends in June.

On Tuesday, New York City declared a public health emergency over a measles outbreak that has affected an ultra-Orthodox Jewish community in Brooklyn's Williamsburg section. Mayor Bill de Blasio ordered mandatory vaccinations in the neighborhood where

# DECLARES HEALTH EMERGENCY



New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio on Tuesday addresses the measles outbreak in parts of Brooklyn.

vaccination with the mumps-measles-rubella vaccine — MMR — for unvaccinated children. The mayor said the city would issue violations and possibly levy fines of \$1,000 for parents who fail to comply.

To date, there have been 285 measles cases that have been concentrated largely in Brooklyn's Orthodox Jewish community, where infections have been smoldering since late last year. Many of the infected children were students at yeshivas — Orthodox schools — in Williamsburg.

City health officials had issued

warnings for weeks and asked parents to vaccinate their children or face closure of schools. Earlier demands by the health department went unheeded as measles transmission continued, city health officials said.

The Brooklyn outbreak — and declaration of a public health emergency — mirror an ongoing measles epidemic involving 153 residents, predominantly children, in Rockland County. That outbreak also has been concentrated in the Orthodox Jewish community.

Although Rockland in late

March banned unvaccinated children from public places — schools, restaurants, parks and airports — the ban was declared illegal Friday by a state court judge.

Dr. Aaron Glatt, chairman of medicine at South Nassau Communities Hospital in Oceanside, told Newsday two weeks ago there is nothing in Jewish religion that prohibits vaccination. “The religion was in place long before vaccines were developed,” said Glatt, who is also a rabbi.

He blamed the outbreaks on

well-meaning parents who have been duped by spreading pseudoscience, which links the MMR vaccine to autism. Vaccine hesitancy is also common among a growing number of people who aren't Jewish, Glatt added.

“Misinformation is very, very dangerous,” Glatt said, “and there is no evidence whatsoever that vaccines cause autism.”

A study published last month in the *Annals of Internal Medicine* involving more than 600,000 people proved again that MMR vaccine does not cause autism. The study was the largest, but one of dozens that have found no links between vaccines and the neurodevelopmental disorder.

Measles is a respiratory illness that produces a rash, Farber said,

noting that a vaccination rate of 95 percent is needed to secure “herd immunity,” the safety net that blankets a community when a sufficient number of people are vaccinated.

“As a society, we need to decide if vaccination is truly optional,” Cioe-Penã said. He asked whether people who use public spaces are free to spread a highly contagious virus.

De Blasio's declaration of an emergency arrived one day after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced measles infections had skyrocketed nationwide. The agency confirmed 465 cases in 19 states in 2019. That compares with 63 in 2010. Measles was declared eradicated in the United States by the CDC in 2000.

## NY vaccination loophole

there are 285 confirmed cases of measles dating back to October. Officials blamed the outbreak on “anti-vaxxers” spreading false information.

Two weeks ago, Rockland County officials declared a similar health emergency where there have been more than 150 confirmed cases. Earlier in March, a federal judge banned 50 unvaccinated students from attending school for three weeks.

Legislation intended to raise the vaccination rate has stalled in the state Assembly and Senate over the last four years. But the measles outbreaks should create momentum to act, some lawmakers said.

“I think this should wake up everyone to the fact that lower vaccine rates can lead to these diseases being more easily

spread,” said Assemb. Jeffrey Dinowitz (D-Bronx), primary sponsor in the Assembly of the bill to end religious exemptions for vaccinations.

He said “anti-vaxxers” have spread “outright lies” about vaccinations causing autism, among other things. Dionowitz countered that vaccines have “save millions of lives over the years.” He said his bill effectively would block unvaccinated children from attending school.

About 96 percent of students in grades K-12 are completely immunized, according to the state Health Department. In a few districts more than 40 percent of students have claimed a religious exemption to not vaccinate, according to statistics provided by the agency. Exemptions are granted by school districts, not local or

state health departments.

Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo, in a radio interview Tuesday, didn't say whether he would support or oppose the legislation. Instead, he said the issue raises constitutional issues. “Look, it's a serious public health concern, but it's also a serious First Amendment issue. It is going to be a constitutional-legal question,” Cuomo said on WAMC, an Albany-based public radio network.

Two Long Island senators are backing a separate bill that would continue the religious exemption but standardize the process for making such claims. The process differs from school district to school district now, said Sen. Phil Boyle (R-Bay Shore), who sponsors the bill with Sen. Monica Martinez (D-Brentwood).

### Treasury Bill Indexed Money Market Account

**2.35%** APY\* **2.11%** APY\*

For balances of \$100,000 and up  
Indexed at 100% of the 30-day US Treasury Bill\*\*

For balances of \$50,000-\$99,999  
Indexed at 90% of the 30-day US Treasury Bill\*\*

- Enjoy high money market rates.
- Fully liquid account.
- FDIC insured money market account.

Visit your local branch today!

Apple Bank

Established 1863 · Member FDIC

[www.applebank.com](http://www.applebank.com)

914-902-2775

\*These rates are effective through April 30, 2019. \$100,000 minimum deposit to earn the advertised 2.35% Annual Percentage Yield (APY). \$50,000 minimum deposit to earn the advertised 2.11% APY. \*\*Treasury Bill Indexed Money Market rate is based on an index calculated by taking the rate of the closing “asked” discount basis of the 30-day Treasury Bill as quoted and published in *The Wall Street Journal* on the last business day of the prior month as set forth below. If there are no exact Treasury Bills with a 30-day maturity, then the “asked” rate used shall be for Treasury Bills with a maturity date closest to, but not to exceed 30 days. These new APYs will then take effect on the first calendar day of each subsequent month and will remain in effect through each subsequent month-end. Balances of \$25,000 to \$49,999 earn an APY of 1.52%, which is 65% of the indexed rate, balances of \$50,000 to \$99,999 earn an APY of 2.11%, which is 90% of the indexed rate, and balances of \$100,000 or more earn an APY of 2.35%, which is 100% of the indexed rate. There is no interest paid on deposits under \$25,000. \$10,000 minimum deposit is required to open this account. A monthly service fee of \$10.00 will be charged each month at the end of the statement cycle if the account balance falls below \$10,000 on any day of the month. Fees may reduce earnings and principal if the account balance falls below \$10,000 on any day during the statement cycle. Please see disclosure for other terms and conditions. This offer may be withdrawn without prior notice.

2148108501