Twitter Thread by Anshel Pfeffer

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THREAD Last night's vote against delaying the budget deadline means nothing can stop the Knesset dissolving @ midnight. Election on 23.3. I explained in @haaretzcom last month why Netanyahu doesn't want a March election. Too many factors beyond his

A March election means the campaign will be dominated by 3 events beyond Netanyahu's control: 1. 3rd wave of covid crashing down on Israel before vaccines have an impact 2. From January 20, a much less friendly administration in the US 3. Early February his bribery trial resumes

Netanyahu's biggest advantage is that he's going in to the election serving PM with control over the critical finance and health ministries. Gantz and his B&W ministers will remain in office but have much less power as discredited members of a zombie party
https://t.co/7iJJaIPmEv

Netanyahu's campaign is going to have 2 themes: Only I could have brought millions of vaccines early to Israel (expect another show when he gets his 2nd jab) and my diplomacy brought peace with Arab states (he's desperate to visit the UAE during the campaign). No-one else could.

Netanyahu's biggest problem going in to the election, he won't have Gantz to kick around any more and brand "weak left" but much more experienced right-wing challengers determined to take him out. Sa'ar, Bennett, Lieberman. Sa'ar tried and failed last year
https://t.co/Ns8neB5Ix8

The next month & a half will be dominated by intra-party maneuvers as the candidates' slates are prepared. Will Likud hold primaries? Will B&W implode or merge? Will Bennett get rid of Smotrich? Who will Labor merge with to survive? Will Lapid and Yaalon run together? Joint list?

Will new stars join the political show for the election? Tel Aviv Mayor Huldai said a few months ago that he will. Former IDF Chief Gadi Eisenkot is still a hot name. But is there room for a new party & would either of them join an existing party as no.2?
https://t.co/GKEjJPPGlc

There are some other interesting questions about this election. Will Netanyahu's last political allies, the ultra-Orthodox parties, end up harming him at the polls by their refusal to abide by the covid-19 restrictions? https://t.co/Wxm8le3VpV

Most of the election action will be on the right. What will happen in the left-wing wilderness? Can Labor survive? Will Meretz seriously try to include Arab candidates? Will the Joint List remain joined despite the Islamists' cooperation with Netanyahu? https://t.co/HwKXrwOAB7

Last tweet. New Covid-19 infections shot up yesterday to 3,594. This election campaign will almost certainly include another Coronavirus lockdown. Which will be bad for Netanyahu's popularity but he'll also tailor the lockdown's restrictions and timing for his political purposes.