

Your Shabbat source of Israeli News– January 4th 2020

Netanyahu confirms he will ask for parliamentary immunity from prosecution

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on January 1st that he will seek parliamentary immunity from prosecution in the three graft cases against him, mere hours before the deadline to file such a request expires. "I will stand in court to crush all the unfounded allegations against me. The immunity law is meant to protect public servants from false allegations and to ensure they will be able to serve the people according to the public's will, not the will of the bureaucrats," said Netanyahu in a statement.



"If the state prosecutor and investigators decide to neutralize a Knesset member, they'll open an investigation against them."

The incumbent said he would file an official request to Knesset Speaker Yuli Edelstein in the coming days in order to start the immunity process.

Blue & White party leader MK Benny Gantz gave his own statement minutes after Netanyahu, saying the prime minister was guilty of the charges against him.

"Netanyahu knows he's guilty, a person who believes that he's innocent is not afraid to stand trial," Gantz said.

"Either we'll have a radical immunity government or a unified national one. Immunity is not the bedrock of democracy, it is a detriment to democracy," he said, referring to a recent claim by Netanyahu.

Yisrael Beytenu Chairman MK Avigdor Liberman announced that his party lawmakers would vote against Netanyahu's request for immunity.

"It is now clear without a shadow of a doubt that all Netanyahu cares about is immunity," said Liberman. "Israel has been taken hostage by his personal and private problems. The only thing standing in the way of a government is immunity. We are not going to be part of an immunity coalition, we will vote against immunity."

Netanyahu and Sa'ar face off in Likud leadership race

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his key rival within Likud party ranks, former education and interior minister Gideon Sa'ar faced off in the party leadership vote on December 26th.

Some 116,048 members of Likud began voting at 106 polling stations across the country from 9 am local time to set the stage for a showdown that makes for the most serious challenge to Netanyahu's Likud leadership in years.

The polling stations will remain open until 11 pm amid fears that wind and rain could keep voter turnout down, with the preliminary results expected sometime past midnight.

A former aide and senior Cabinet minister under Netanyahu, Sa'ar has long been considered a rising star in Likud and a potential future heir, but while others are patiently waiting for Netanyahu to step down on his own, Sa'ar has been the only one who has dared to take the incumbent head-on.

Netanyahu wins Likud primaries by landslide

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu won a resounding victory in the vote for the leadership of his Likud party on December 27th, in a boost ahead of what is likely to be a hard-fought general election in March.

A Likud tally gave Netanyahu 72.5% of votes, against 27.5% for challenger Gideon Sa'ar, who conceded defeat, tweeting that he would now back the incumbent "for the sake of a Likud victory in the (general) election".

Though the troubles of "King Bibi", as he is nicknamed by his fans, do not seem to have dented the loyalty Netanyahu commands among his supporters, some Likud members have said it is time for fresh leadership. Netanyahu had played down Sa'ar's challenge, talking up his own security credentials and international prowess.

Thanking supporters for the "huge" Likud leadership victory, Netanyahu tweeted that he would "continue leading the State of Israel to unprecedented achievements".





Russian Court Rejects Israeli's Appeal in Drug Trial

A 26-year-old woman, name Naama Issachar, with dual American and Israeli citizenship has been jailed in Russia since April after authorities allegedly found nine grams of cannabis in her luggage.

She was sentenced to seven and a half years for drug smuggling, a charge she denied, noting she did not plan to enter Russia during the stopover on her way back to Israel from India.

A Russian court on December 19th rejected an appeal against her conviction. Her mother said she would file another appeal with a higher-level court and also turn to the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg.

Issachar's case has become a cause celebre in Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has called the prison sentence "absurd," asked Russian President Vladimir Putin to pardon her in a phone call last week.

Moscow has said the Russian leader would consider the request.

Netanyahu, who has touted close ties with Moscow, promised during a campaign event earlier this month to spring Issachar from Russian prison, raising hopes of a diplomatic breakthrough.

After the December appeal hearing, Netanyahu told Issachar's mother that he was continuing to work for her release. Israeli officials have expressed hopes that Putin will release Issachar as a goodwill gesture before or during his visit to Israel next month.

Naama had been transferred to a remote facility last week, without winter clothes and books, after losing appeal over drug charges. Issachar's family and lawyers had not been informed of the move out of Moscow.

The Issachar family said they had to search for their daughter for days, with the Russian authorities being anything but helpful.

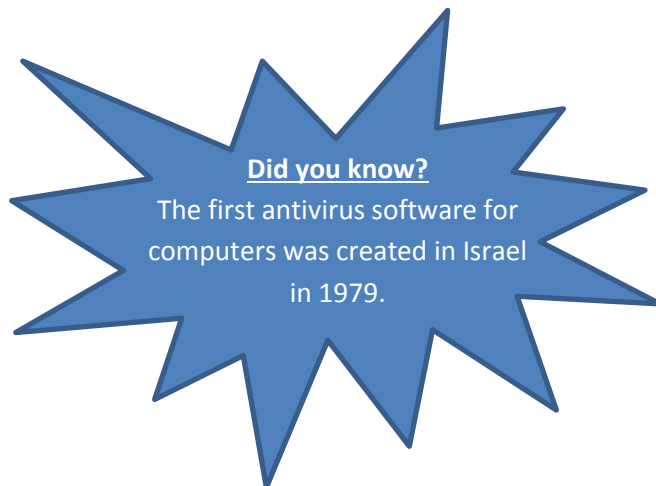
On January 1st, Naama returned to the facility dubbed 'Prison 11' at the Moscow prison where she had been held before the relocation, after intense efforts by the Israeli consulate in Moscow.



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Did you know?

The first antivirus software for computers was created in Israel in 1979.



Bourekas

You will need –

- 7 cups flour
- 2 tablespoons of baking powder
- 200 gr' butter or margarine
- 1 cup oil
- 1 cup boiling water

Filling –

- Potatoes + Salt and pepper
- Cheese mix (Feta, pizza cheese, cheddar, mozzarella etc.) + 1 egg

How to make it –

1. Melt the butter or margarine
2. Put all the dry ingredients in a ball and mix them
3. Add the oil, water and margarine and mix.
4. Using rolling pin, flatten the dough (really thin!)
5. Create shapes of bourekas (be creative) and add the filling inside
6. Put in the oven for 30 minutes in 340 degrees.

The *Shlichim* in the Greater Washington Area opened a WhatsApp group where we will share articles, news, and government updates from Israel. If you are interested in joining the group, please email Yael.

