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The Londoner: Let children be exposed to viruses, says Professor Gupta

7-9 minutes

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Professor Sunetra Gupta, who has been a leading critic of the cost of lockdown, says she welcomes the return of schools as children “if anything... would benefit from being exposed to this and other seasonal coronaviruses”.

Gupta, who is a professor of theoretical epidemiology at Oxford, told The Londoner that alongside huge social and educational benefits, the “evidence is mounting that early exposure to these various coronaviruses is what enables people to survive them”.

Professor Gupta came to prominence earlier this year when she questioned the government’s reliance on the Imperial College London modelling of the coronavirus epidemic. Professor Gupta and her team produced modelling that posited a greater number of Britons could have immunity to the virus than thought. She has been a longstanding critic of the wider impacts of lockdown on the poorest in society and across the world.

Praising the return of schoolchildren to the classroom, she said that while children might transmit the virus, trade offs have to be made and that “we can take strong measures” to still protect the

vulnerable who need to shield.

But Professor Gupta also revealed the toll of her different approach. “We’ve found it difficult to publish our work in mainstream journals,” she said, adding “sadly anything that deviates from the consensus has been met with criticism – not simply of the science, but we’ve been labelled as saying things that are dangerous.”

She rejected being bracketed with libertarian lockdown sceptics, saying her opposition came from the left. “I personally think that only thinking along the lines of eliminating coronavirus, without giving heed to the consequences on the disadvantaged young and globally, is a dereliction of our duties as global citizens”.



(PA)

Piers Corbyn, the former Labour leader’s brother, has raised nearly all of his total in a crowdfunder set up to support him after he was arrested at recent anti-lockdown protests over the weekend. The fund on CrowdJustice was at over £15,000 this

morning, approaching an £18,000 goal. Expect to hear more from the elder Corbyn.



(WireImage)

Writer Kathy Lette likes a drink and says: “The only dry thing about me is my sense of humour.” The forthright author tells *Woman & Home*: “In truth, all mums need to make the occasional lunge for the bottle — the wine bottle and the peroxide bottle. The trick is to just never, ever get them confused.” That’s the kind of shock blonde to avoid.

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Boris Johnson’s approval ratings for his handling of the pandemic among users of the Conservative Home website have continued to plunge. In the latest survey only 48 per cent thought he was handling it well, down from 92 per cent in March. But one man’s ratings are stable: Chancellor Rishi Sunak is sitting pretty at 82 per cent, one up from last month’s score. The Tory faithful are for turning.

Claim: Dehenna Davison (credit: Parliament) ()

Compare and contrast attitudes from Tory MPs. Caroline Nokes walked on to College Green in Westminster “to meet polite XR demonstrators from the constituency”, she tweeted. Red-wallers Dehenna Davison and Ben Bradley instead blasted the protest as a “pantomime” and a “colossal waste of police time”. Perhaps it’s time for an intra-party listening exercise.

Work hard, play hard and eat ice-cream



Daisy Edgar-Jones, star of *Normal People*, said she was “so proud to receive a Breakout STARmeter Award” from users of film website IMDb. The first of many? Meanwhile singer Pixie Lott showed off her brushed eyebrows, *Game of Thrones* star Maisie Williams posed with an ice-cream and actor Richard Blackwood said he was back in “work mode” with “no games being played”. We’re team ice-cream.