

## At their peak, Dhoni & Kohli perfect captains in every format: Tharoor



Shashi Tharoor.

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Lokendra Pratap Sahi  
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London-born Dr Shashi Tharoor is such a delight to interact with. The sitting MP from Thiruvananthapuram (a former Union minister, by the way) is precise with answers and, naturally, exceedingly well informed.

Indeed, engaging with the 66-year-old 'Mr Articulate' is fascinating.

Dr Tharoor, restricted somewhat by torn ligaments in his left ankle, wasn't comfortable taking questions on politics. However, he happily obliged when it came to a cricket-specific Q&A.

Excerpts...

**Q: Have been curious... What attracted a former Under-Secretary General of the UN, a three-time Congress MP and celebrated author to cricket... From *The Oval in London (twice)* to *Eden Gardens in Kolkata*, I've had opportunities to lob questions at you...**

**A:** My cricket fandom goes back much before my years at the UN... I was introduced to Test matches on a sunny afternoon in Bombay by an indulgent father (late Chandran Tharoor), at age seven. That was at the lovely Brabourne Stadium in January 1964, when a depleted England team were touring under Mike Smith. The Englishmen were

so ravaged by an assortment of maladies that they played both wicket-keepers and enlisted the fielding of India's 12th man, (late) Hanumant Singh! Hanumant went on to score a century on debut against them, in the next Test... Whatever the strength of the visitors, though, cricket on Day III was marvellous. I watched enthralled as (late) Budhi Kunderan, India's opener and wicket-keeper, who looked like a West Indian and played like one, pulled John Price, England's fastest bowler, for six over square leg. The ball landed practically at my feet! Kunderan almost instantly repeated the shot, this time just failing to clear the rope... In less time than the difference between a four and a six could be explained to me, Kunderan was on 16. But he tried too often, sending up a skier that swirled in a gigantic loop over mid-on. As the ball spiralled upwards, Kunderan began running. When it was caught by a relieved (late) Fred Titmus in the deep, Kunderan continued running, hurled his bat skywards with an exuberant warwhoop, caught it by the handle and ran into the pavilion.

**Q: Incredible recall...**

**A:** It was exhilarating stuff and I was hooked for life!

**Q: Early favourites?**

**A:** Crowd-pleasers... Those who combined cricketing brilliance with skills to entertain, like the ability to hit a six into that portion of the stands cheering for one the loudest. I have seen both (late) M.L. Jaisimha and Salim Durrani do that in the 1960s.

**Q: What's the No.1 difference from the time you first went to the Brabourne and now?**

### #DIFFERENT STROKES

**A:** Limited overs cricket, undoubtedly, and much greater athleticism. When I started watching, it was not unusual to see players almost waddling after the ball as they 'chased' it to the boundary!

**Q: You've been a traditionalist - in cricket, at least... Does the Test format remain the premier test of skill and character?**

**A:** Very much so. No doubt about it. For the true cricket fan, watching a Test unfold is like reading a novel. An ODI is, at best, a short story. As for T20, it's a sitcom. Each lingers in the memory only as much as these equivalents do! It saddens me to see that, now, Tests are played to depleted audiences as the emanation of 'serious' cricket, to be endured only by the true believers. I'm so pleased about the 'Bazball' model, pioneered by Brendon McCullum and Ben Stokes's England that is changing all that for the better.

**Q: My next question, in fact, was on head coach McCullum and captain Stokes! We keep talking of the threat to Test cricket, but England smashed 500-plus in a single day against Pakistan earlier this month... Pundits who spelt doom five-six years ago, would see that the format is actually alive and kicking... Were you too skeptical at a point in time?**

**A:** I had the patience, perhaps because I rarely had the time in recent years to watch more than the Test highlights, or snatches of play,

while on a treadmill or at a meal.

**Q: Graham Gooch, whom I interviewed recently, felt ensuring more than 90 overs in a day would be difficult in quite a few countries, but cutting down the number of Test match days from five to four could be considered. Your take - would any change attract more to the oldest format?**

**A:** I don't care! The purist will settle for nothing less than a five-day Test match. The only innovation I'm prepared to embrace is the occasional day-night Test, on view from late 2015. However, I'd still prefer sunshine, blue skies and green grass, together with a gentle breeze, as the ideal Test match setting.

**Q: Eternal Test cricket romantic! You've described T20 as a sitcom, but it has a phenomenal following...**

**A:** It's an exciting diversion... Enjoyed and, usually, soon forgotten!

**Q: The obvious financial aspect is one part of the T20 story. How has the format made batters and bowlers better?**

**A:** Look, T20 has certainly led to innovative strokes, like the scoop, clinical reverse sweeps... Bowlers have sharpened the yorker and improved targeted use of the bounce... And, of course, the format has taken fielding to amazing new heights.

**Q: Minuses?**

**A:** Audiences and batters think that, in T20, every ball has to be whacked. It has probably made them more impatient than is wise for them. Also, put the batters in a Test environment, without the circle-related fielding restrictions, and

some of them become lesser players instantly.

**Q: But, qualitatively, is the T20 generation cricketer better?**

**A:** Every sportsman can only be judged by the demands of his era.

**Q: There are divergent views... Has T20 improved captaincy in any way?**

**A:** Tactically, yes. But a good captain is a good captain regardless of the format.

**Q: While on captaincy, are you in favour of one voice in the dressing room or separate captains for Test cricket and the two white-ball formats?**

**A:** Both approaches can work, depends on the individuals... At their peak, (Mahendra Singh) Dhoni and (Virat) Kohli were perfect captains in every format. I'm not sure many T20 captains would do a good job in a First-Class match, let alone a Test.

**Q: England have struck gold with Stokes's daring in Tests and Jos Buttler lifting the T20 World Cup last month... Must India be rigid? Why not Hardik Pandya as captain in T20s, if not both ODIs and the shortest format?**

**A:** Perhaps, why not? But give Pandya some matches more to prove his worth. He's done very well so far, but you're talking of one IPL season (2022, successfully captaining Gujarat Titans) and a few Internationals. No more.

**Q: Did you expect the IPL to be such a game-changer?**

**A:** I did expect the IPL to be just that, mainly in terms of attracting fans back into the stands. But how much of a game-changer? Even the

IPL's most enthusiastic backers could not have predicted.

**Q: Reality is that the IPL has grown at the cost of the more established domestic tournaments. Says quite a bit about the Board of Control for Cricket in India's priorities...**

**A:** Yes. I'm so glad to see the Ranji Trophy and the Duleep Trophy back this season in traditional manner.

**Q: We've forgotten to win a World event (Champions Trophy victory was back in 2013) and, this month, even lost the ODIs in Bangladesh! How healthy is our cricket?**

**A:** Oh, come on. No team wins all the time. Moreover, look at our injury list.

**Q: Surprises, however, never cease... MoM in the first Test against Bangladesh, Kuldeep Yadav, got dropped in the second! Jaydev Unadkat, who last played a Test in 2010, got picked instead. Terrific for Unadkat, yes, but even a horses-for-courses move must make sense. Kuldeep's confidence has been clobbered...**

**A:** I was shocked by Kuldeep's omission... With his astonishing variations, he represents a far more challenging option than, say, an Axar Patel... We're speaking at the end of Day 1, but I do feel the easy win fans have been dreaming of could be more difficult to execute without Kuldeep in the XI.



Ben Stokes.



Virat Kohli.



MS Dhoni.

trigger for him to give up the Test captaincy (having already relinquished it in T20s). How closely did you follow that chapter in our cricket?

**A:** In the newspapers. I don't move around in cricketing circles and, so, don't hear the 'inside' stories. It was a sad episode.

**Q: Where would you place Virat as captain?**

**A:** Virat has been amongst the very best. No.1 in passion and wearing his emotions on the sleeve. No one could accuse him of disengaged leadership.

**Q: We've been blessed with outstanding captains this century... Sourav Ganguly, Dravid, Dhoni, Virat...**

**A:** Correct. Different strengths in each case, but all inspiring leaders.

**Q: Without limiting yourself to India, who has come across as the most inspirational captain?**

**A:** Perhaps because I was unduly influenced by the purists, I'd still pick Mike Brearley. He won irrespective of the resources and helped players perform beyond their normal abilities. Today, in a very different way, I'd say Stokes has an X factor.

**Q: What set Brearley apart from the rest?**

**A:** Combination of personal skill, understanding of the game, tactical acumen and man-management



Mike Brearley.

### Christmas Trees

Christmas trees were first used by ancient Egyptians and Romans. The origin of the use of Christmas trees goes way back to ancient Egyptians and Romans. They used evergreen trees like fir or pine trees, wreaths, and garlands. And the use of modern Christmas trees started in Germany in the 16th century. Instead of the gilly decorations that we see on them today, they were decorated with fruits and nuts. Wet bet you didn't know this interesting fact about the Christmas tree!



### #PSYCHOLOGY

#### Hidden Good In Villains

Inside, villains are a little less evil than they outwardly seem while heroes are fully good guys inside and out.



Both adults and children more often reported that villains were inwardly good than that heroes were inwardly bad, a study finds.

"In other words, people believe there is a mismatch between a villain's outward behaviours and their inner, true self, and this is a bigger gap for villains than for heroes," says Valerie Umscheid, a doctoral student in psychology at the University of Michigan and the study's lead author.

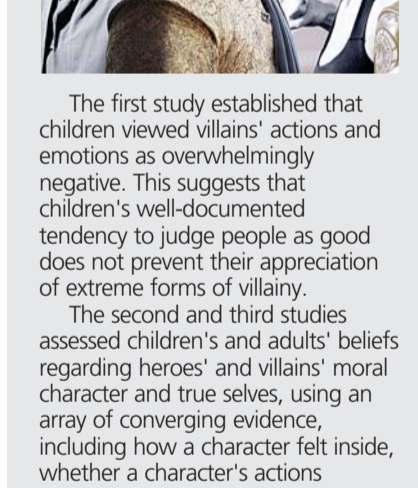
Inside, villains are a little less evil than they outwardly seem while heroes are fully good guys inside and out.

Umscheid and colleagues conducted three studies with 434 children (ages 4-12) and 277 adults to determine how individuals make sense of antisocial acts committed by evildoers. They focused on participants' judgments of both familiar and novel fictional villains and heroes, such as Disney's Ursula from *The Little Mermaid* and Pixar's Woody from *Toy Story*.

It's time to get to work. Start by turning your computer off, disconnecting your keyboard, and removing cables. Clear your desk or table and assemble your cleaning tools. Shake, Brush, Blow and Vac.

For relatively well-kept keyboards, the following four steps might be enough:

- Begin by turning your keyboard upside down and gently shaking it to see what falls out.



The first study established that children viewed villains' actions and emotions as overwhelmingly negative. This suggests that children's well-documented tendency to judge people as good does not prevent their appreciation of extreme forms of villainy.

The second and third studies assessed children's and adults' beliefs regarding heroes' and villains' moral character and true selves, using an array of converging evidence, including how a character felt inside, whether a character's actions reflected their true self, and whether a character's true self could change over time.

Across these measures, the research indicated that both children and adults consistently evaluated villains' true selves to be overwhelmingly evil and much more negative than those of the heroes. At the same time, researchers also detected an asymmetry in the judgments, wherein villains were more likely than heroes to have a true self that differed from their outward behavior.

Both children and adults believed characters like Ursula had some inner goodness, despite the bad/moral actions they regularly engage in, Umscheid says.

### #CLEAN-UP

#### How to Clean Your Keyboard

With the right supplies and our trusty tips, your keypad will look good as new in no time.



Spending hours at your computer, whether for work or play, is unavoidable for many of us. Constant use is going to take a toll on your keyboard. Dust and hair build up is inevitable, fallen tortilla chips and sandwich crumbs, not so much. But we're not here to judge, we're here to help you clean up. In this guide we'll highlight the supplies you might need and run through how to clean your keyboard step-by-step.

It's time to get to work. Start by turning your computer off, disconnecting your keyboard, and removing cables. Clear your desk or table and assemble your cleaning tools. Shake, Brush, Blow and Vac.

For relatively well-kept keyboards, the following four steps might be enough:

- Begin by turning your keyboard upside down and gently shaking it to see what falls out.

Use your brush to gently sweep debris loose. It works best if you tilt your keyboard one way then another and brush down the rows.

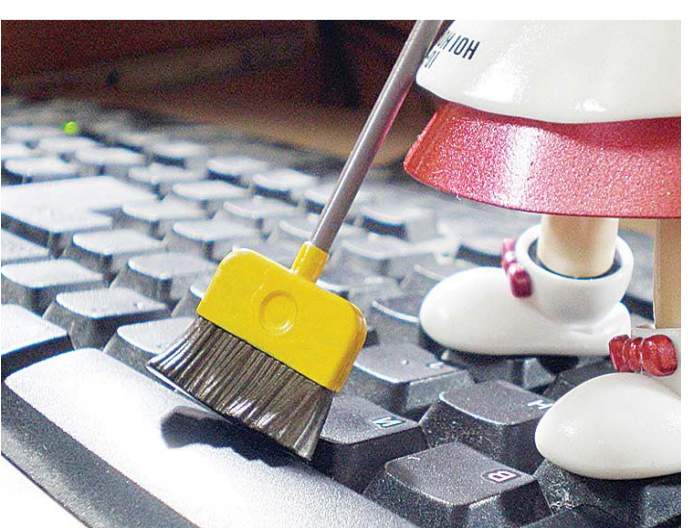


Use your keycap removal tool to very carefully detach your keycaps. Some keyboards can be further disassembled, but check in with the manufacturer to ensure you know how to put it back together again before you take it apart.

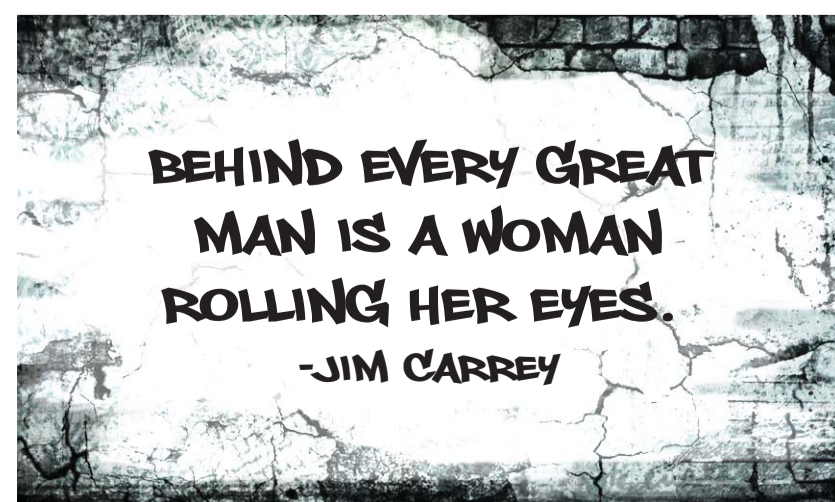
Pop keycaps in a bowl of warm soapy water and use a sponge, cloth, or brush to give them a scrub.

Try spraying a little isopropyl alcohol on a microfibre cloth, rub on stubborn stains, and dunk keycaps in the soapy water again to rinse.

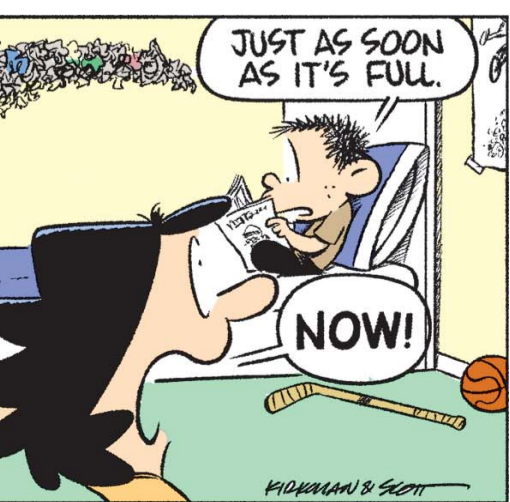
Make sure everything is completely dry before you put your keyboard back together, and use your photo to ensure you put all the keys back in the right places.



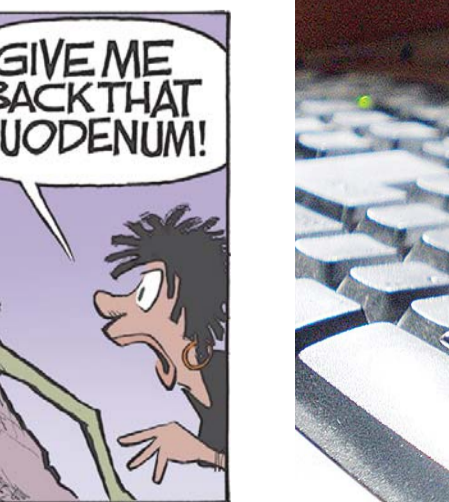
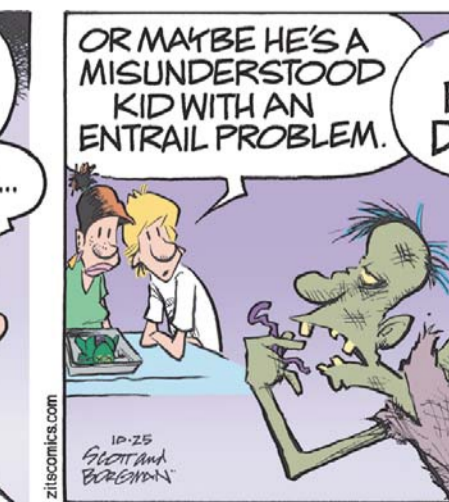
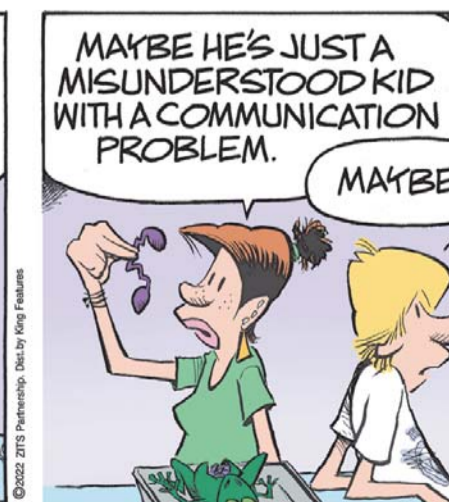
### THE WALL



### BABY BLUES



### ZITS



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman