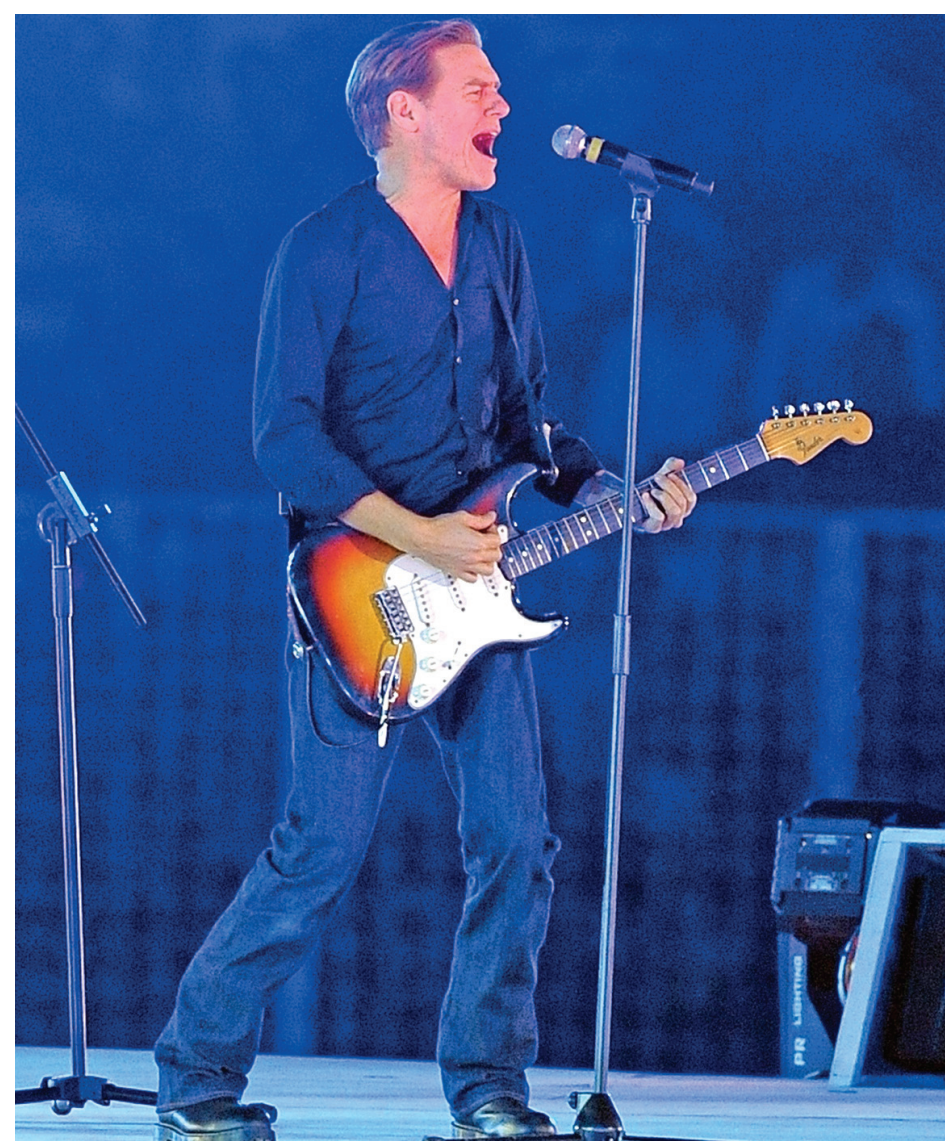




# Inauguration splendour, glory



## World Cup Cricket opens magnificent aura

**SHARM DE ALWIS**  
The World Cup Cricket spectacle has opened in all its magnificent aura and Sri Lanka takes on Canada on the 20th in the opening round of her quest to be World Cup winner in 2011. It is moot to reflect on the strengths and weaknesses between the conquering predecessors of 1996 and the eager, current crop.

When we were on the threshold of the sixth World Cup, Sri Lanka had the dubious distinction of having lost twenty games, the most number of World Cup matches. But most of the Gods and demi-gods of the Pantheon have their country residences in Sri Lanka.

They put on hold their petty differences and worked together in one common cause: to upset the apple cart and bring home the laurels.

A man by man comparative analysis is in order. We have in Thushara and Dilshan two openers superior to the speculative Sanath and Kulu who would wane as often they waxed.

One down slot may be occupied in the event of a quick wicket, by Samanera who is as capable as Gurusinghe to keep the barn door closed. The next slot was occupied by the murderous Aravinda who has had no comparison for pulverising attack but he is on record having said that Mahela would in the fullness of time be better than himself.

Next we come to the immaculate Kumar Sangakkara, arguably the best batsman today in the world circuit. He takes over from 'Captain Cool' Ranatunga and is capable of getting under the skin of the opposition just as Arjuna handled meaningfully those who tried to needle him, but he does it in a more sophisticated manner of one to the manor born.

Then we come to the grey area which was occupied by dependable Koshan Mahanama and Hashan Tillekeratne. We now have Mathews, Chamara and Kapugedera in rotation to fill the shoes of two demi-gods.

However grand Vaas was in his heyday, Lasith Malinga is not far behind. Murali replaces himself with more garnered venom like the doosra as the best bowler the world has ever seen. Pramodaya, Dharmasena and Upul Chandana have better replacements in Thisara Perera, Kulasekera and Kandana's No Ball Junction Dilara Fernando who is a wicket taker and has the best slow ball of any in world cricket.

With such a breath-taking line-up it is no illusion to have Sri Lanka lift the World Cup 2011 aloft above the heads of the players and I take the liberty to print what I received from Sasi Ganesan, the prolific opening bat of S Thomas' who captained the school in his third year in 1976.

It is a song written by a young Australian bowler on his maiden visit to the dustbeds of the subcontinent where he is, predictably, flogged by the batsmen. It is to be sung to the tune of John Lennon's 'Imagine'.

Imagine the grass is even  
Not easy, you can try  
No hell facing us  
Imagine all the pitches  
Seaming for today, oohooooo

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Imagine all the countries  
Coming here to play  
The batsmen making merry  
And the bowlers getting flayed  
Imagine all this outfield  
With a little less... dewwwwwwww

\*\*\*\*\*

You may say I'm a seamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope some curator will hear us  
We'll take more wickets than one

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Imagine no five-fors  
I wonder if you can  
Don't know if I can take a wicket  
Let alone bowl to a plan  
Imagine we're all at Perth  
Sharing 20 scalps... Yeaaaaaaah

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You may say I'm a seamer  
But I'm not the only one  
I hope these guys come down under  
And then we will have some fun