

## Sport

## Floodlights scam Asian punter found guilty

LONDON, Aug 21: A professional gambler was found guilty on Friday of plotting to sabotage an English Premiership match in a multi-million pound Far Eastern betting scam, reports AFP.

Hong Kong-born Wai Yuen Liu was the London-based fixer for gang who plunged top English games into darkness by tampering with stadium floodlights.

A jury at Middlesex Guildhall Crown Court took six hours to find him guilty by a majority 10-2 verdict over a plot to sabotage a match between Charlton and Liverpool last season.

The overseas syndicate was also thought to be behind the abandonment of two other matches which netted Far Eastern organised crime gangs up to 60 million pounds (90 million dollars) when the lights went down unexpectedly during a match.

Liu, 38, of Kensington, West London, remained impassive after the nine-man, three-woman jury found him guilty at the end of a four-day trial.

The scam was uncovered only when two Malaysians and Liu were caught red-handed at the ground of Charlton Athletic on February 10 where they had planned to plant an electrical device to sabotage the flood lighting.

The "circuit-breaker" was to be triggered with a remote control unit when the score favoured the syndicate during a fixture at the Valley against Liverpool on February 13.

The huge profits meant they could promise to pay Charlton Athletic's security guard Roger Firth 20,000 pounds to let them into the ground to plant the device.

Malaysians Chee Kew Ong, 49, and Eng Hwa Lim, 35, and Firth, 49, all pleaded guilty to conspiracy to cause a public nuisance.

Liu had denied the charge. The four are due to be sentenced next Wednesday.

The syndicate was linked with a match at Upton Park in November 1997 where West Ham were playing at home to Crystal Palace which was abandoned when the lights went out with the score 2-2.

A month later, Selhurst Park was also plunged into darkness after only 13 seconds of the second half when Wimbledon were playing at home to Arsenal with the score at 0-0.

**Greece too good  
for El Salvador**

ATHENS, Greece, Aug 21: Greece comfortably beat El Salvador in a friendly on Friday for the second time this week, once again scoring three goals against them, reports Reuters.

Their 3-0 victory followed a 3-1 win over El Salvador two days ago. Altogether it was a third victory in a week for the Greeks who also defeated Mexico 3-2 on Monday.

Greece, warming up for their European Group Two qualifier against Norway on September 4, dominated the slow game, opening the score in the 40th minute through Angelos Basinas.

Young striker Nikos Lymberopoulos made it 2-0 with a penalty in the 50th minute and Apostolis Liolidis sealed victory with a header following up a corner by Giorgos Karagounis in the 81st.

## UN soccer tourney

UNITED NATIONS, Aug 21: Soccer teams representing dozens of countries will kick off an international tournament in New York on September 19 in honour of the UN Day of Peace, it was announced on Thursday, reports Reuters.

Participating in the tournament will be 64 teams drawn mainly from soccer-playing communities in the New York area, Grenada's UN envoy, Lamuel Stanislaus, and ambassador Emilia Castro de Barish of Costa Rica told a news conference at the United Nations.

"It is through the universal language of music and through the culture of sport that the world has the best opportunity to attain the universal goal of brotherhood," Stanislaus said.

Because the tournament starts on the eve of the opening of the annual UN General Assembly debate on September 20 attended by foreign ministers and other dignitaries, it is called the September Debate Friendship Cup. The Day of Peace is officially observed on the Assembly's opening day, September 14.

The teams will represent countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean.

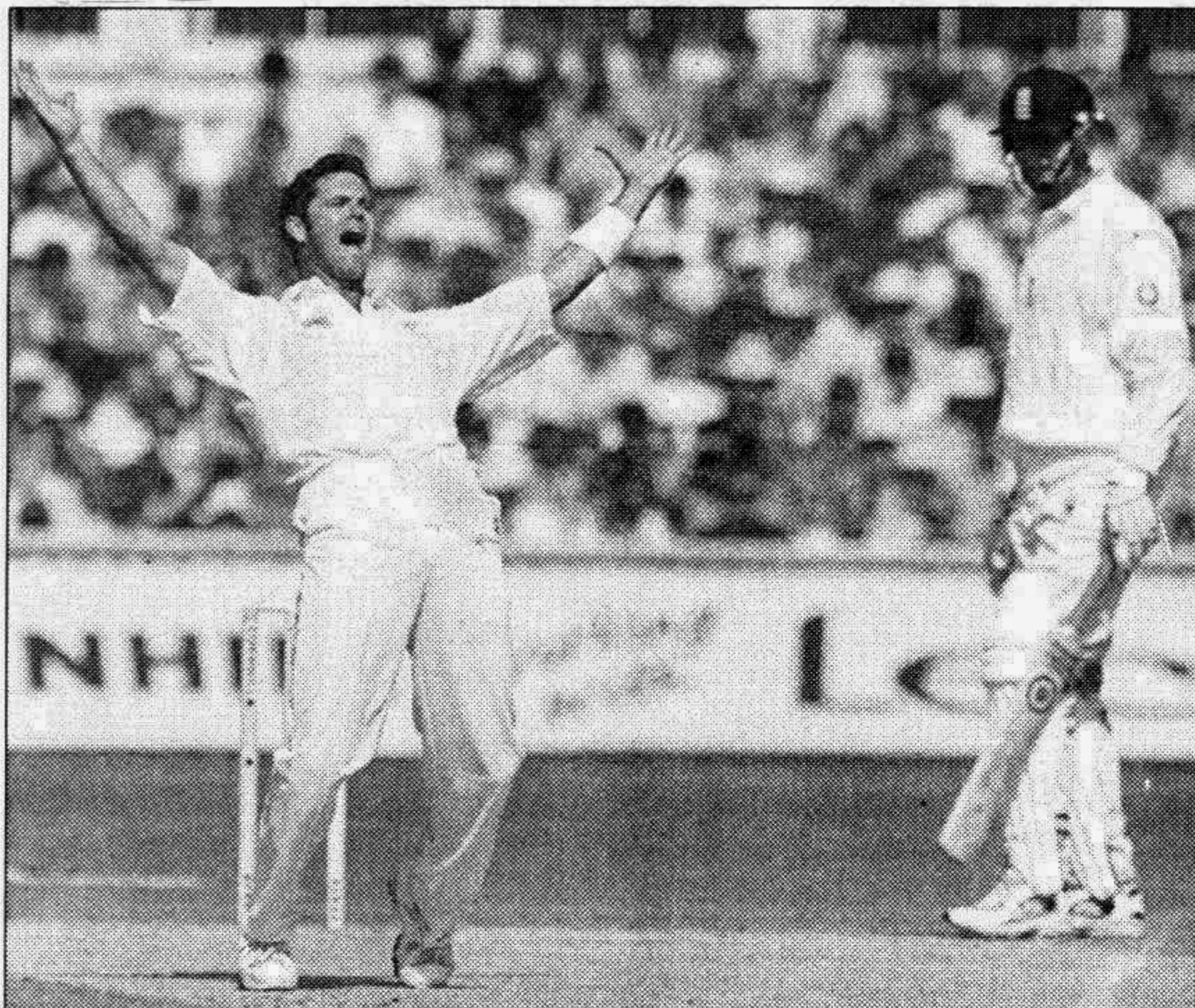
The matches, also sponsored by the Eastern New York Soccer Association and a group of non-governmental organisations, will be played at Flushing Meadows Park, in the New York Borough of Queens. Admission will be free.

## Kournikova skips US Open

MCLEAN, Virginia, Aug 21: Anna Kournikova, the world's 13th-ranked women's player, withdrew from the US Open because of a minor stress fracture in her right foot, reports AP.

The Russian star's management company, Advantage International, said Friday that Kournikova sustained the injury while practicing last week. Kournikova is expected to return to competition in September.

The US Open, the year's final Grand Slam tournament, begins Aug 30.



New Zealand all-rounder Chris Cairns, who took five wickets in England's first innings, is euphoric after having Ed Giddins leg before on the third day of the Oval Test yesterday.

— AFP photo

## Cairns does the damage



LONDON, Aug 21 (Agencies): Chris

Cairns skittled the tailenders within 21 minutes Saturday as New Zealand took three wickets in eight balls to bowl England out for 153 on the third morning of the fourth Test at The Oval.

England trail New Zealand by 83 on the first innings, the 14th successive Test in which they have shown a first-innings deficit.

After resuming at 150 for seven the home team lost Alan Mullally in the fourth over, and three balls later frontline batsman Mark Ramprakash perished without adding to his overnight 30.

Mullally faced 11 balls before prodding New Zealand left-arm Daniel Vettori off his pad and Mathew Bell took a fine, low one-handed catch.

It was another miserable batting display by England.

Nasser Hussain made 40 before falling to a leg-side trap set

had under-performed. "We're not playing to our capability," said acting coach Graham Gooch. "If we're going to win the game, we have to be more aggressive. If we can get up close to their score, it's going to be a one-innings match."

Skipper Stephen Fleming and the 20-year-old Vettori ensured that England would not enjoy a first-innings lead. The pair put on 78 for ninth wicket to lift the tourists after starting the day on 170 for eight.

The bulk of the runs came from Vettori after Fleming had struck a painful blow on the shoulder by Andy Caddick in the opening over.

Vettori completed his second half-century of the series from only 47 balls before falling to opposing left-arm spinner Phil Tufnell for 51.

Fleming was left unbeaten on 66 and said afterwards he had used his bruised shoulder as extra motivation.

"It spurs you on," he said. "We've had a bit of luck and grabbed the momentum. The wicket is quite difficult and we could have been all out for about 120. Now it's going to be a good end to the series."

Showing no sign of his discomfort when England went in to bat, Fleming then held two good slip catches to dismiss Michael Atherton and Graham Thorpe, both for 10.

Vettori's left-arm spin ended Darren maddy's first Test innings for 14 and he also bowled Alec Stewart for 11. His figures in a long, unchanged spell were two for 44 in 31 overs.

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Nasser Hussain made 40 before falling to a leg-side trap set

for him by Chris Cairns, who also sent back recalled all-rounder Ronnie Irani for a single.

When Caddick was bowled by Shayne O'Connor for 15, England were reduced to 141 for seven.

Stewart said it was good bowling rather than bad batting that had caused England's problems.

"People have been got out by good bowling," Cairns and Nash have bowled exceptionally well throughout the series and been backed up very well here by Vettori."

### SCOREBOARD

Scoreboard on the third day of the fourth Test between England and New Zealand at The Oval on Saturday:

#### NEW ZEALAND: First innings 236 (S Fleming 66 not out, D Vettori 51)

#### ENGLAND: First inning (overnight 150-7)

Atherton c Fleming b Nash 10

Maddy b Vettori 14

Hussain c Bell b Cairns 40

Thorpe c Bell b Cairns 10

Stewart b Vettori 11

Ramprakash c Parore b Cairns 30

Irani lbw b Cairns 1

Caddick b O'Connor 15

Mullally c Bell b Vettori 5

Tufnell not out 0

Giddins lbw b Cairns 0

Extras: (b-1, lb-5, w-6) 17

Total: (All out) 153

Fall of wickets: 1-25; 2-29; 3-46; 4-87; 5-91; 6-94; 7-141; 8-153; 9-153.

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Bowler: O M R W

Cairns 19 8 31 5

Nash 14 5 40 1

O'Connor 13 3 30 1

Vettori 33 12 46 3

Astle 1 1 0 0

(Incomplete)

French football league table after Friday's matches (played, won, drawn, lost, goals for, against, points):

## Close shave for Atherton

LONDON, Aug 21 (AFP): England opener Michael Atherton will escape formal punishment after reacting angrily to his dismissal on the second day of the deciding Test against New Zealand at The Oval on Friday.

Match referee Peter Van der Merwe said instead he would have a "quiet word" with the former England captain.

Atherton had battled for an hour at the crease as England replied to the tourists' first-innings total of 236 and appeared to have weathered early spells from Chris Cairns and Dion Nash.

But just three overs after tea, having failed to add to his interval score of 10, Atherton pushed forward to Nash and edged to Stephen Fleming at first slip, waving his right hand angrily at his dismissal and accidentally flicking off the bail.

It was the sort of reaction which has, in the past, invited censure from the International Cricket Council match referees, but South African Van der Merwe confirmed he would not be punishing Atherton.

"I won't be taking any action but it is not the done thing to do and I will be having a quiet word with him," confirmed Van der Merwe.

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