

WC budg slashed

REUTERS, Tokyo

The World Cup has become the latest casualty of Japan's economic slump after organisers said they were slicing 22 million dollars (15.4 million pounds) off the budget for the 2002 event.

The draft budget, which initially totalled 63.4 billion yen (370 million pounds) when it was compiled last year, will be slashed to 60.7 billion yen as a result of Japan's economic downturn, said a spokesman for JAWOC, the Japanese organising committee.

He also said JAWOC has asked the 10 Japanese municipalities which will be hosting the matches to donate 100 million yen each to the budget.

While the spokesman said on Wednesday the donations would not be used specifically to make up for any shortfall in revenue in other areas, he did admit that things were tough given the country's apparent slide back towards recession.

"Obviously, we need funding to avoid running the event in red ink," he said.

The Asahi Shimbun daily reported on Wednesday that JAWOC was forced to ask the local governments for contributions because donations from other groups, such as businesses, were unlikely to meet expected targets.

The paper said many of the 10 municipalities were likely to be upset at the request, as they had already been asked in December to contribute an additional 100 million yen.

"Some local governments may say 'why again?', but we think they will all agree to pay in the end," the spokesman said.

The new draft budget is expected to be approved by JAWOC's board, which will meet on Friday.



PHOTO: INTERNET

Colombian Juan Pablo Angel celebrates after scoring a goal against Bolivia during their World Cup qualifying match at the Campin stadium in Bogota on March 27.

Colombia's Angel



REUTERS, Bogota

Striker Juan Pablo Angel scored twice as Colombia celebrated Fausto Asprilla's return to international football with a 2-0 World Cup qualifying win over Bolivia on Tuesday.

Asprilla, brought back almost exactly one year after saying he never wanted to play for his country again, responded by creating the first goal for Angel early in the second half.

Angel later converted a penalty to leave Colombia with 19 points from

11 games in the South American group. Bolivia, effectively out of the running for a World Cup berth, have nine after suffering their sixth straight away defeat.

Colombia, greeted by a rapturous reception from the 45,000 crowd, made an explosive start.

Bolivia lost possession from the kick-off and Angel broke clear on goal only to be viciously taken down just outside the penalty area by goalkeeper Jose Carlos Fernandez.

Fernandez was not even booked and Asprilla, playing in an unaccustomed midfield role, hit a weak free kick straight into the defensive wall.

Asprilla hit the bar with a dipping shot from 25 meters in the fifth minute but the rest of the first half was dull, with Colombia uninspired and disjointed and Bolivia content to pack the midfield.

Colombia pulled off the ineffective Victor Bonilla at halftime and moved Asprilla into attack. Within eight minutes,

Asprilla turned and split the Bolivian defense with an incisive pass to Angel, who rounded goalkeeper Fernandez and scored into the empty net.

Twenty minutes later, Luis Ribeiro pushed over Gerardo Bedoya in the area and Angel placed the resulting penalty coolly to the right of Fernandez.

Angel could have had a hat trick but he saw one effort heroically blocked by Juan Manuel Pena and fired another effort wildly over the cross-bar. At the other end, Ronaldo Arana missed an open goal for Bolivia with the score at 1-0.

PERU OUTCLASS CHILE

In Lima, Peru outclassed their old rivals Chile to win a passionate South American World Cup qualifier 3-1 despite missing a handful of chances.

Peru created more than 20 clearcut openings but their old failing in front of goal kept them waiting until the last 20 minutes for victory in an enthralling clash between the two neighbours.

Goals by Flavio Maestri, Andres Mendoza and Claudio Pizarro eventually won the match and virtually ended Chile's hopes of reaching the 2002 World Cup finals.

Chile dropped to eighth place in the South American group with 10 points from 11 games. Peru went above Chile and Bolivia with 11 points, but their own chances remained very faint after poor earlier results.

Peru, whose poor marksmanship has cost them dearly in the competition, dominated from the start, but the 45,000 crowd at the National Stadium must have thought they were watching an old film as the ball

again refused to enter the net.

German-based Pizarro was the biggest culprit. The Werder Bremen striker missed three clearcut chances shortly before halftime, the best coming in the 43rd minute when he fired high and wide from close range with ample time at his disposal.

Half-time substitute Flavio Maestri finally broke through in the 54th minute with a header from a long cross from the right after so many well-constructed moves had produced nothing.

Chile, who complained their bus was stoned on the way from the airport to their hotel when they arrived in Lima, equalized eight minutes later through Reinaldo Navia after a move in which he and Ivan Zamorano sliced through the Peru defense.

Peru kept wasting chances, including an extraordinary miss by striker Maestri who headed wide from three meters with the goal at his mercy after a shot rebounded to him.

But the home side went back in front when Mendoza scored with another header following a corner in the 73rd minute.

Six minutes from the end, Pizarro, who had missed three more excellent chances in the second half, finally got it right.

LATIN SCORERS

REUTERS, Rio de Janeiro

Scorers in the South American World Cup qualifying competition after Tuesday's matches:

7-Romario (Brazil),
5-Rivaldo (Brazil),
4-Gabriel Batistuta (Argentina),
Hernan Crespo (Argentina), Ivan Zamorano (Chile), Agustin Delgado (Ecuador).

3-Ariel Ortega (Argentina), Juan Sebastian Veron (Argentina), Jairo Castillo (Colombia), Juan Pablo Angel (Colombia), Carlos Paredes (Paraguay), Jose Cardozo (Paraguay), Dario Silva (Uruguay), Nicolas Olivera (Uruguay).

2-Claudio Lopez (Argentina), Roger Suarez (Bolivia), Antonio Carlos (Brazil), Vampeta (Brazil), Marcelo Salas (Chile), Alex Aguinaga (Ecuador), Hugo Brizuela (Paraguay), Jose Luis Chilavert (Paraguay), Roque Santa Cruz (Paraguay), Roberto Palacios (Peru), Federico Magallanes (Uruguay).

1-Claudio Husain (Argentina), Gustavo Lopez (Argentina), Marcelo Gallardo (Argentina), Matias Almeyda (Argentina), Pablo Aimar (Argentina), Roberto Ayala (Argentina), Erwin Sanchez (Bolivia), Jaime Moreno (Bolivia), Julio Cesar Baldivieso (Bolivia), Alex (Brazil), Euller (Brazil), Juninho Paulista (Brazil), Marques (Brazil), Roque Junior (Brazil), Reinaldo Navia (Chile), Fabian Estay (Chile), Hector Tapia (Chile), Javier Margas (Chile), Rodrigo Tello (Chile), Alex Viveros (Colombia), Frankie Oviedo (Colombia), Ivan Ramiro Cordoba (Colombia), Ivan Rene Valencia (Colombia), Ariel Graziani (Ecuador), Clever Chala (Ecuador), Eduardo Hurtado (Ecuador), Ivan Kaviedes (Ecuador), Ulises de la Cruz (Ecuador), Wellington Sanchez (Ecuador), Celso Ayala (Paraguay), Delio Toledo (Paraguay), Gabriel Gonzalez (Paraguay), Jorge Campos (Paraguay), Roberto Acuna (Paraguay), Juan Jayo (Peru), Juan Pajuelo (Peru), Nolberto Solano (Peru), Pedro Garcia (Peru), Claudio Pizarro (Peru), Flavio Maestri (Peru), Andres Mendoza (Peru), Dario Rodriguez (Uruguay), Gabriel Cedres (Uruguay), Pablo Garcia (Uruguay), Paolo Montero (Uruguay), Daniel Noriega (Venezuela), Edson Tortolero (Venezuela), Giovanni Savarese (Venezuela), Juan Arango (Venezuela), Miguel Mea Vitali (Venezuela), Ruberth Moran (Venezuela).

Del Bosque to stay at Real until 2003

REUTERS, Madrid

Real Madrid have extended the contract of coach Vicente Del Bosque until June 2003.

"The renewal of his contract reflects the total confidence that the club has in the coach," sporting director Jorge Valdano was quoted as saying on the club's official website on Tuesday.

"This reflects the club's determination to end the situation of having a succession of coaches, like we have had in the last decade," Valdano added.

Del Bosque, who replaced John Toshack in November 1999 and led the team to their eighth European Cup victory last season, is the 11th coach to hold the post in the last 10 years.

Football

REUTERS, London

Former England manager Glenn Hoddle is to cut short his contract at Southampton and return to his spiritual home at Tottenham Hotspur.

Hoddle, who scored 132 goals in 566 matches with Tottenham during a 12-year career starting in 1975, decided after secret talks on Tuesday to rejoin his old club following the sacking of George Graham.

The decision was announced by Southampton chairman Rupert Lowe on the club's official website on Wednesday.

Lowe, making no secret of his disappointment, said Hoddle had phoned him the previous night to say he wished to quit Southampton immediately.

"He is joining Tottenham Hotspur as their manager," Lowe added. "I was surprised at the speed with which negotiations had proceeded from what I hope had been a standing start to conclusion in a little over five hours."

"I was also disappointed that Glenn had chosen to turn his back on the club that gave him the opportunity to resume his career in top-flight management and on a squad that he had welded into an exciting team and who in return have given them their unconditional loyalty as evidenced by the stream of recent contract extensions."

"I'm also sure that our fans will share my regret at what has happened as they too have given Glenn every support and have been an important component in his success."

Lowe said he was saddened that Hoddle had chosen to leave the team with a European place in sight

and a new stadium only about five months from completion.

"While Glenn has 15 months of his contract outstanding I do not intend to hold him against his evident will to move elsewhere," he added.

Lowe did say Southampton would not release Hoddle until Tottenham had paid satisfactory compensation.

"Negotiations remain outstanding as to the compensation payable to this club," he said.

Hoddle's decision late on Tuesday to quit Southampton and replace Graham follows secret talks with his old club earlier in the day.

The manager's job fell vacant after the club's new owners ENIC dismissed Graham only three weeks before their FA Cup semi-final against their old north London rivals.

Woodgate, Bowyer lied ?

Football

REUTERS, Hull

Two Leeds United footballers on trial for serious assault launched a "cowardly attack" on a lone Asian student then lied to police to avoid the consequences, a court has heard.

Jonathan Woodgate, Lee Bowyer and their "partners in crime" battered Sarfraz Najeib unconscious in January last year then concocted false accounts for police and the jury during their six-week trial, prosecutors said.

A third player, Michael Duberry, who is charged with conspiring to pervert the course of justice, showed real courage by telling the court that Woodgate had said on the night of the attack that he had "been in a fight with some Asians", chief prosecutor Nicholas Campbell said in his closing speech.

But he said even Duberry had failed to tell the whole truth and that the others had told a "pack of lies" and changed their stories after reading eye-witness accounts.

"They have concealed evidence from investigating authorities...they have all lied and accounts have been changed and tailored to suit...the evidence they had to confront," Campbell said.

"They have shown themselves to be cowards, not only in that it was a cowardly attack but also in their unwillingness to do anything to face up to the consequences of their actions," he added.

Witnesses who told the jury of their horror when they saw the savage attack had acted in stark

contrast to the defendants by choosing to help police, often at great personal cost, Campbell said.

"These witnesses are courageous people. How very different is the case of these five defendants," he said.

Woodgate, Bowyer and two friends, Paul Clifford and Neale Caveney, could face jail if they are convicted of grievous bodily harm with intent and of affray. They all deny the charges.

Campbell said on Tuesday that the accounts given by these four defendants each rested on a major lie.

Woodgate, who witnesses said took a flying jump with both feet on to Najeib's limp body, said under oath that he fell and hurt his ankle as he ran after his friends when they chased some Asians after a fracas in Leeds city centre.

The defender, who had played once for England, said he did not join in the attack and was too distracted by the pain in his ankle to pay attention to what was going on. But Campbell said this was fabricated.

"He was just fine. Fine enough to do what he did in the attack on Sarfraz Najeib," Campbell said.

The prosecutor also said both Clifford and Caveney, who are childhood friends of Woodgate, had lied.

He reminded the jury that forensic evidence showed earlier in the trial that Clifford had bitten Najeib "like a dog" on the face.

"It is plain as a pikestaff that if you are satisfied that Mr Clifford was responsible for that then common sense drives you to the conclusions that Jonathan Woodgate and his cronies were there taking a full part

in what was going on," he said.

Bowyer had told the court that someone hit him and that he fell over before reaching the scene of the attack. Campbell said if this had been true onlookers would have seen him.

Campbell said that although Bowyer, 24, had carried off a "remarkable performance" in the witness box, he had lied about the fall and about many other things, both to police and to the court, to protect himself.

"The only reason he told lies was not to get his mates out of trouble -- Lee Bowyer isn't bothered about others -- he's bothered about himself."

"The lies he told were because he is guilty of this offence," he said.

Campbell said that Bowyer joined in the attack on Najeib, kicking and punching his unconscious body and assaulting the victim's brother Shahzad when he tried to halt the violence.

He reminded the jury that the blood of Shahzad Najeib was found on Bowyer's black Prada leather jacket.

After leaving Najeib lying in the road, the defendants fled the scene, Campbell said, and Bowyer and Caveney were caught on camera hugging in what was "part of the victory celebrations".

"They were embracing in that sense of camaraderie when two men have been involved in a joint enterprise...and done what they felt had to be done. Adrenalin was riding high," Campbell said.

The case continues on Wednesday.

Cloud over Bierhoff

Football

REUTERS, Berlin

Troubled Germany hero Oliver Bierhoff, who will have to sit on the bench when his country play Greece on Wednesday, might never wear the captain's armband on the international stage again.

Coach Rudi Voeller confirmed on Tuesday that the AC Milan striker would start the group nine match in Athens as a substitute.

Voeller insisted he was still counting on the 32-year-old for the future, but many saw the signs that an era was drawing to a close when Bierhoff did not return to the pitch after halftime of the match against Albania on Saturday.

After missing an early chance, the man who so often lifted Germany out of tight spots looked completely lost.

Bayern Munich goalkeeper Oliver Kahn took over the captaincy

for the second half of a game a lacklustre German side won 2-1, courtesy of a late goal from newcomer Miroslav Klose.

Bierhoff, who has now gone 365 painful minutes without a goal for his country, had come on only for the last 25 minutes of Germany's previous game, a 1-0 defeat to France in a friendly last month.

After that match, in which he was again disappointing, his performance was harshly criticised by former Germany captain and coach Franz Beckenbauer.

In the build-up to the game against Albania, Bierhoff said he felt Voeller did not give him the kind of support former

Germany coach Berti Vogts had for his captain, Juergen Klinsmann, when faced with a similar crisis.

But against Albania, Bierhoff failed to do enough to convince Voeller that he was the right man to lead the side.

Beckenbauer, the most influential man in German soccer, again

criticised Bierhoff on Monday, writing in his column in popular daily Bild that Germany needed a new captain.

Kahn, the Bayern Munich president suggested, would be an option with Bayer Leverkusen central defender Jens Nowotny also a possibility.

"I don't think I will surprise anybody by saying that Kahn will captain the team against Greece," Voeller said.

But the former popular World Cup striker refused to be drawn on who might wear the armband on a long-term basis.

"Olli (Bierhoff) is going through a difficult period but I'm convinced he can still help the team," Voeller said.

"After the match against Greece we've got a two-month break which will leave us plenty of time to sort things out. Now we have a tough match to play and that's more important than talking about who will be the German captain."



PHOTO: AFP

Peru's Claudio Pizarro (R) slots the ball past Chilean goalkeeper Nelson Tapia during a World Cup qualifier in Lima on March 27.

Hoddle going to Spurs

Football

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