

## Paro FC to face Club Valencia of the Maldives in AFC Cup

Thinley Namgay

BoB Bhutan Premier League 2021 champions Paro FC began their preparation for the upcoming Asian Football Confederation (AFC) against Club Valencia of the Maldives.

Paro FC will play a preliminary game against Valencia in April in the Maldives. The two-time Bhutan Premier League champions, Paro FC will make their second appearance in the AFC Cup following the club's inception in 2018.

Valencia is the second position holder in the 2020-2021 season's Dhivehi Premier League, the highest professional football league in the Maldives. Valencia debuted in the AFC Cup in 2002.

In preliminary round two, the winner will face Bangladesh's top professional club Abahani Ltd Dhaka. Abahani Ltd Dhaka is a well known club in the Bangladesh Premier League.

Paro FC started an intense practice session after an easing of lockdown recently.

At the AFC debut in 2020, Paro FC played Defenders FC of Sri Lanka and proceeded to the next round with an away goal advantage. Both

the teams had a 5-5 aggregate in two games, but Paro maintained a 3-3 draw in Sri Lanka. However, Indian Super League champions Bengaluru FC thrashed Paro in the second round 10-1 on aggregate.

Paro FC's head coach, Puspalal Sharma, said the pandemic made the training challenging but the team is trying their best.

He said the club planned a six-week training to face Valencia and the practice is on track.

"A six-week cycle is the normal practice we can deploy for periodisation. We have plans to recruit international players, but it is difficult with the restrictions and travel formalities to bring in foreign players," Puspalal Sharma said.

However, many question whether Paro has a good pool of players this time in the AFC comeback.

In their first AFC competition, Paro FC had critical players like Kerala Blasters player Chenchu Gyeltshen and Muthoot Football Academy's Jigme Tshering Dorjee.

Puspalal said their absence wouldn't make a difference to the team, as other players are equally competent.



► Paro FC players practicing at Wochu Sports Arena in Paro

"We are strategising accordingly to fill the gap."

Paro didn't buy any players from the local clubs to play against Valencia.

Puspalal said the President Cup held in Mongar a few months back benefited the team by identifying key areas required to prepare for the AFC Cup 2022. "The lessons learnt will help us be stronger in the AFC."

He said he is watching the opponent's game tactics closely. "We have completed their player profiling and also hold some latest match videos," Puspalal said.

Paro FC will head for the Maldives next month to train before the actual game. The club is still working on approval formalities from the

government.

Paro FC's striker Yeshi Dorji said he and his teammates are confident. "For a team to succeed, the very first

thing we need to do is trust and believe in each other."

Yeshi Dorji said the Paro FC is going to the Maldives only to win.



### TOMORROW

#### Good Day

- to perform Lhabsang Thruesoel
- to appease local deities
- to perform wealth accumulation ritual
- to start new business
- to shift house
- to make medicine and start medication
- to hold good discussions

- to approach higher authority
- to sow seeds

#### Bad Day

- to marry and celebrate

**A good day for rituals (laza):** those born in the dog year.

**Generally a good day (sogza):** those born in the sheep year.

### FEBRUARY 28, MONDAY

#### Good Day

- to perform annual offerings

#### Bad Day

- to consecrate
- to appease local deities
- to perform wealth accumulation ritual
- to hand and take over office
- to learn astrology
- to shift house
- to roof house
- to start new business
- to enter into new house

- to hold good discussions
- to approach higher authority
- to marry and celebrate
- to appease Naga

**A good day for rituals (laza):** those born in the snake and horse years.

**Generally a good day (sogza):** those born in the rat and pig years.

**A bad day (shedza):** those born in the monkey and rooster years.



► The 8.6km Bajo-Khuruthang road has completed. The road shortens the travelling distance between Khuruthang and Bajo by nearly 10km. The road had been riddled with potholes for decades. Work to widen and blacktop the road began in May 2020 with a GOI funding of Nu 124.685 million. The work was expected to complete by September last year. However, the pandemic delayed the project's completion.

### WEATHER

SUNRISE : 6:29am | SUNSET : 5:59pm

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Source: National Center for Hydrology and Meteorology. For any weather information: Call hotline 335578