

Conte prefers stress to 'tea and biscuits'

REUTERS

Tottenham Hotspur manager Antonio Conte said he is relishing the pressure that comes with managing a Premier League club, adding that a calm life spent having "tea with biscuits" was not for him.

After going unbeaten in his first nine Premier League games with Tottenham, a club record, Conte has suffered back-to-back league defeats, losing to his former club Chelsea and Southampton.

"I think our job brings, not just myself but all the coaches, a lot of stress," Conte told reporters ahead of Sunday's home game against Wolverhampton Wanderers. "To stay at this level you have to manage with stress every day."

"I think this is normal for us and if you don't want stress then I think this job is not good for you."

"You have to stay in your house and stay in bed and stay calm eating good tea with biscuits."

Spurs are seventh in the league on 36 points, three behind Arsenal in fifth having played a game less.



## Harsh past made Munim fearless

Known for his fearless batting approach, Munim Shahriar boasts a staggering 167.50 strike rate in the four matches he played for Fortune Barishal in the ongoing Bangladesh Premier League. Learn about the right-hander's reason behind such a batting mentality, the struggles he had to face to reach this level and his expectation surrounding the national team among many other things as he shares his story with **The Daily Star's Ekush Tapader** in an interview. The excerpts of the interview are as follows:

**The Daily Star (DS):** How happy are you with your performance?

**Munim Shahriar (MS):** There is no point being happy or sad in cricket. I am trying my best. I will leave the happiness part for life after cricket. It is a problem if you become too happy in your cricketering career.

**DS:** How did it feel to have not gotten a team directly from the draft even after doing so well in the Dhaka Premier League last year?

**MS:** As a human being, I did get upset. But I took this normally. I am used to this as nothing in this world is certain or permanent, not in Bangladesh at least. But I was glad when I was picked by a team later.

**DS:** You could not start playing straightway in this edition of the Bangladesh Premier League. How did it feel?

**MS:** I contracted Covid-19 after getting a team in BPL and it took me some time to recover. As I was in quarantine, it took me some time to get into the groove in practice. My coaches -- Fortune Barishal batting coach Nazmul Abedeen Fahim and head coach Khaled Mahmud -- helped me a lot in the nets. That helped me prepare myself.

**DS:** What is the reason behind your fearless mentality?



**MS:** The life from which I emerged, I actually don't feel like I have anything to lose after that. Even if things go awry, it can't be as bad as my life was previously. That's why I tried to apply such a fearless mentality. I just want to put pressure on myself and keep going. The result is not in my hand.

**DS:** Could you elaborate on the struggles you faced in life?

**MS:** I was out of the scene for a while after representing the country in the Under-19 level. I was in focus for a while in 2016 when the likes of [Mehedi Hasan] Miraz and [Mohammad] Saifuddin represented the Bangladesh Under-19 side. After that I had to struggle a lot. I could not perform well for the Under-19 side and that's why I got off-tracked. Also, I was not able to take the one or two chances that I got in the

premier league. I played a decent knock once in a while but I lacked consistency. I had other troubles in my life at that time and that too affected my career.

**DS:** Tell us about your turnaround.

**MS:** I got a chance to play for Abahani in the last Dhaka Premier Division T20 League as Liton [Das] bhai was injured. I was actually not supposed to play but Liton bhai's injury made way for me. I used to do well in the local tournaments that I played across the country. I used to play for hire.

**DS:** What's your plan now for your career? It must be amazing for you to be performing in BPL.

**MS:** It is the Almighty's blessing. People always wanted to see me playing on TV. So it's nice that I am playing reasonably well and getting telecast on TV. I hope that I can play my way for as long as I am playing cricket.

**DS:** Was it your innate characteristic to play attacking cricket as required in the T20 format?

**MS:** "Hit a ball so hard that the fielder fears to even attempt to stop it." This is what my childhood coach Hayatul Islam Hanna sir from Mymensingh used to say. But I don't think of myself as such a power hitter. I just try to follow my mentor's advice. That actually shaped my mentality.

**DS:** You have got coaches like Faheem and Mahmud. What are their takes on your batting approach?

**MS:** I feel blessed to work with people like them. They give me advice that I can incorporate practically. They gave me the freedom to play freely and that is very important to help grow one's confidence.

**DS:** How do you feel about your chances to represent the national team?

**MS:** The Almighty has a plan for me. But it does not matter if I play in the national team or not. However, if I do get a chance, I will want to play for Bangladesh for a long period.

## Robson to Kings' rescue

SPORTS REPORTER

A second-half strike from Robson Da Silva meant Basundhara Kings keep growing in confidence in the Bangladesh Premier League as the defending champions scrape past Muktiyoddha Sangsad 1-0 at the Shaheed Ahsan Ullah Master Stadium in Tongi yesterday.

Two victories in a row took Kings to the second position with six points from three outings, one less than leaders Sheikh Jamal DC, who played out a goalless draw against Bangladesh Police FC at the Birshreshtha Shaheed Flight Lt Matiur Rahman Stadium in Munshiganj.

The two-time league champions have surprisingly been struggling in the professional league. Kings lost the first match and since then, notched up wins in the next two encounters by the lowest of margins.

Nevertheless, the lack of form of Kings' forwards could largely be due to the absence of injured Brazilian midfielder Jonathan Da Fernandes, whose vacuum is yet to be filled in the big-budget squad as Kings prepare to face another challenge against Bangladesh Police in their next match.

Yesterday, Kings were saved by last season's top scorer Robson yet again. The Brazilian struck in the 58th minute with a solo effort while Bosnian striker Stojan Vranjes, who was recruited with high expectation to generate more goals, was soul-searching after missing a penalty kick in the 78th minute, just two minutes before Kings almost conceded the equaliser.

Kings could have dropped points again had substitute Obaidur Nabab not made a goalline save from a goal-bound header from Egyptian forward Ahmed Ayman.



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