Bangladesh is the next big market for computing growth

Rex Lee, Corporate Vice President and General Manager of APAC commercial of ASUS talks to Zahidur Rabbi of The Daily Star

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MD. ZAHIDUR RABBI

Rex Lee, Corporate Vice President and General Manager of APAC commercial at ASUS, has been with the company since 2007, leading its global computing strategy and market expansion across Asia and Europe. Over his nearly two decades at ASUS, he has overseen major innovations in AI-driven PCs, sustainability initiatives, and regional growth. In an interview with The Daily Star, Lee outlines how the Taiwanese technology giant is positioning itself for the next decade, both globally and in Bangladesh.

The Daily Star (TDS): ***How does Bangladesh fit within Asus's global vision for the future of computing roadmap?***

Rex Lee (RL): Our global vision centres around creating technology that empowers every individual to achieve more. We see computing evolving beyond traditional devices into intelligent companions that can think, learn and adapt. AI is at the heart of this evolution, and Asus is investing heavily in AI-driven PCs and next-generation form factors that redefine productivity.

Bangladesh is an exciting part of that journey. With a population of more than 180 million and a young, tech-savvy demographic, it is a country ready for digital transformation. What we are doing here today is laying the foundation for the future. The market might not be huge yet, but it is growing fast, and we want to be part of that growth from the beginning.

TDS: ***What unique factors make Bangladesh one of the key emerging markets for Asus investment and strategic focus?***

RL: For Bangladesh, population is a major factor. It is similar to what we saw in India 10 years ago. Back then, India's PC market was around 3 million units. Today it is over 7 million. As economies grow, productivity tools such as PCs and laptops become essential. Bangladesh is following that same trajectory. Another important factor is consumer awareness. Through our research, we discovered that even in commercial markets, end-user brand perception matters. People search for ASUS not just as a product but as a brand they want to trust. That's why our marketing strategy here involves strong engagement with content creators and young professionals. Awareness drives demand, even for business-grade technology.

TDS: ***How do you view the growth of digital infrastructure, IT spending and technology adoption in Bangladesh?***

RL: Over the last decade, smartphones changed the way people interact with technology. Initially, they disrupted PC sales because basic digital tasks moved to mobile. But now we are seeing a shift again. As users mature, they need devices with higher productivity potential, particularly for education, creative work and small business management. That is where PCs and AI-powered laptops come in. I think Bangladesh is entering a new stage where digital adoption is not just about connectivity, but capability. The appetite for better devices, more reliable systems, and professional tools is growing.

TDS: ***What are Asus's expectations from this market over the next 3 to 5 years in both consumer and commercial segments?***

RL: Our goal is simple: to be the number one PC brand in the world and a top player in every major market, including Bangladesh. Over the next three years, we expect consistent double-digit growth here. The consumer segment will continue to drive volume, but the commercial side like education, enterprise and government – will add stability. We are building our presence through strategic investments. For example, the last launch event we organised represented one of our biggest marketing investments in South Asia relative to revenue. We are looking long term, not for short-term returns. Once the market expands, our early presence will help us grow with it.

TDS: ***What opportunities does Asus see in sectors like government, banking, education, and SMBs in Bangladesh?***

RL: We see great potential in all of them, though timing is important. The recent political transition means many government projects are temporarily on hold. We expect things to stabilise by late 2026. Once policies are clearer, we anticipate growth in digital classrooms, smart banking, and e-governance. For now, we're focusing on building awareness and strengthening our enterprise ecosystem – ensuring that when these sectors expand again, Asus is ready to deliver solutions.

TDS: ***How is ASUS preparing its local channel, service ecosystem, and technology roadmap to support enterprise-level requirements?***

RL: In Bangladesh, our team is entirely local, supported by our regional headquarters in Singapore. This gives us agility and local insight. However, we do face some regulatory challenges, such as visa limits and restrictions on establishing large foreign offices.

Despite these, we are building strong partnerships with distributors, resellers, and service centres. We've learned that reliability and after-sales support are crucial. Our roadmap includes more service points, better training, and a smooth customer experience for both consumers and enterprises.

JOBS SPOTLIGHT

Helen Keller Intl. Bangladesh
HR Assistant
Deadline: November 8
Eligibility:
- Bachelor's degree in Human Resources, Business Administration, Management, or a related discipline.

Minimum experience: 1-2 years

BRAC Bank PLC
Business Development Manager, SME Liability
Deadline: November 10
Eligibility:
- Graduation from any reputed university with a satisfactory academic track record, with prior experience in a relevant field in banks/ NBFIs.

Minimum experience: 4-5 years

Sheltech (Pvt.) Ltd.
Senior Executive/ Assistant Manager, Customer Support
Deadline: November 15
Eligibility:
- MBA (major in Marketing)/ post-graduation in a relevant subject, with prior experience in a relevant field.

Minimum experience: 5-7 years

Panjeree Publications Ltd.
Graphic Designer, Pre-Press
Deadline: November 30
Eligibility:
- Graduation/Diploma in Printing Technology or a related discipline.

Minimum experience: 5-10 years

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The trouble with companies using AI for the sake of it

MAISHA ISLAM MONAMEE

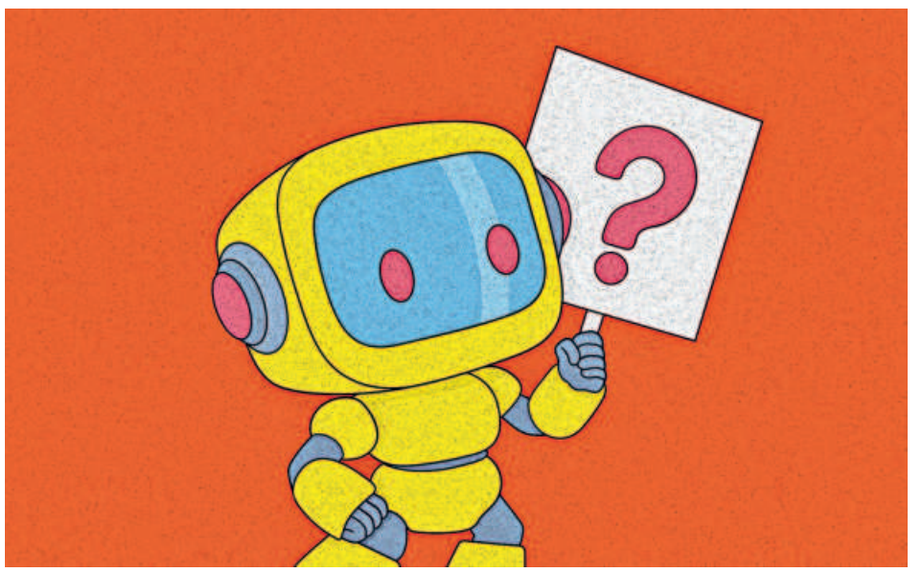


ILLUSTRATION: ZARIF FAIAZ

It has become almost fashionable for companies to claim they are using AI. Every boardroom, every quarterly report, every strategic offsite seems to revolve around the same language of transformation. But what is quietly emerging beneath all the noise is a pattern of misplaced ambition with businesses applying advanced technology to areas that barely need it, while neglecting the parts of their work that could be fundamentally reimagined.

A recent McKinsey & Company article on the first year of agentic AI argues that this technology, defined by its ability to act autonomously rather than just predict or generate, exemplifies the above misalignment perfectly. According to the report, many organisations are building agents not to solve the right problems, but to showcase that they can. So, the more telling question is not what AI can do, but where it should do it.

This tension is particularly visible in Bangladesh and similar Global South contexts, where firms are experimenting with AI without fully understanding the nature of their own work processes. The temptation to adopt the latest technology is strong. But enthusiasm alone cannot make AI effective.Success with agentic AI requires an understanding of the work itself, while understanding its patterns, variability, and dependence on human judgment.

Not every job benefits from autonomy. Low-variance, high-standardisation tasks like data reconciliation or payroll processing do not need a cognitive engine. They need efficiency, not intelligence. High-variance, low-standardisation work, such as strategy, creativity, and negotiation, remains distinctly human. It is the messy space of judgment, instinct, and error, where the cost of misinterpretation outweighs the benefit of speed.

The true potential of agentic AI lies in the middle ground: tasks that have sufficient structure to define workflows but enough variability to require decision-making, judgment, or coordination. These are workflows that repeat often enough to define, but vary just enough to require decisions along the way.

Examples include supply chain management processes that require adaptive routing, customer service workflows that escalate in complexity, or financial operations where data is standardised but decisions are contingent on market conditions. In these contexts, AI can act as a collaborator rather than a substitute, handling execution while humans focus on oversight, interpretation, and higher-order judgment. In most use cases, this middle ground is often neglected.

It needs to be kept in mind that agentic systems are not plug-ins; they are co-workers. They demand clarity of process, auditability of action, and a willingness to redefine what roles mean. The companies that fail often do so not because the technology underperforms, but because they refuse to redraw the boundaries of their work. The real shift will come when organisations begin redesigning workflows around the agent itself. The most effective AI deployments so far have been those that respect the tacit knowledge humans bring. A system can decide, but only if someone first defines what good decisions look like.

For many economies still defining their digital maturity, this reflection feels urgent. In places where processes are semi-structured and still heavily dependent on human oversight, the temptation will be to leapfrog directly into agentic AI. But skipping the slow work of standardisation first is a mistake. Before we can build agents that act, we must build workflows worth acting within.

In the end, the real transformation would not come from what AI can do, but from what companies learn to stop doing. The compulsion to automate everything, to equate progress with replacement, blinds us to the nuance of good design. Not all inefficiency is waste; not all human friction is bad. Some parts of work are supposed to stay unpredictable. And agentic AI, if deployed thoughtfully, may help us find balance again.

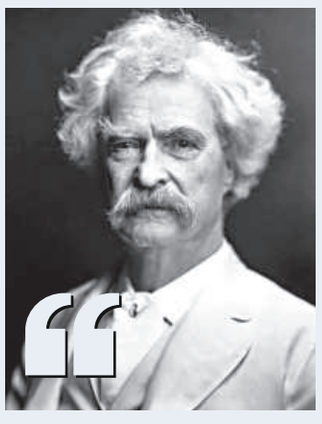
GTA VI maker Rockstar Games accused of anti-union firings

NEXT STEP DESK

Rockstar Games, the studio behind the popular Grand Theft Auto series, has been accused of anti-union firings after dismissing between 30 and 40 employees, according to a recent report by Bloomberg. According to the report, the Independent Workers' Union of Great Britain (IWGB) claims that every dismissed employee was involved in a private Discord chat for union organising, was already a union member, or was engaged in efforts to establish a union at the company.

As per a report by The Verge on the matter, IWGB president Alex Marshall described the action as "the most blatant and ruthless act of union busting in the history of the games industry" in a statement. However, Take-Two Interactive, Rockstar's parent company, provided a different explanation. Alan Lewis, head of global corporate communications, said the terminations were solely "for gross misconduct, and for no other reason", though no specific details were provided, as per The Verge.

The firings occurred across Rockstar's UK and Canadian offices approximately seven months before the scheduled release of Grand Theft Auto VI in May 2026.



"The law of work seems unfair, but nothing can change it; the more enjoyment you get out of your work, the more money you will make."

MARK TWAIN