

Mobile internet subscriber base shrinks by 1.31 crore in seven months

MAHMUDUL HASAN

The number of mobile internet subscribers fell by 1.31 crore in the seven months to January this year, reaching 11.60 crore, with a loss of 10 lakh in January alone.

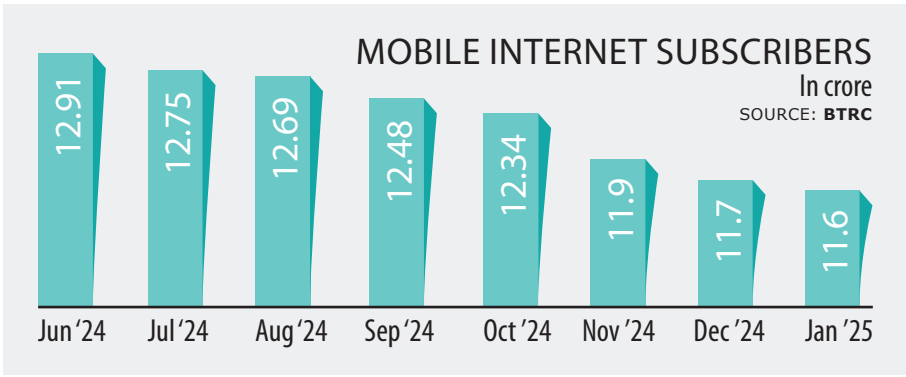
Industry experts attribute this decline to a 50 percent increase in SIM tax, a reduction in subsidised SIM sales by operators, and economic hardships faced by consumers.

Following the tax hike, smaller operators such as Banglalink and Robi significantly reduced their subsidy expenditures, making it more challenging to attract new customers.

At the start of the fiscal year, the government raised the SIM tax by 50 percent to Tk 300.

Previously, operators often sold SIM cards at significantly lower prices or even distributed them for free to expand their customer base.

"The increased SIM tax makes it very difficult for mobile operators to subsidise



SIMs as heavily as they did in the past," said Taimur Rahman, chief corporate and regulatory affairs officer of Banglalink.

"This challenge is even greater for smaller operators, as larger telecom companies can still afford higher subsidies, creating a competitive imbalance in the market," he added.

Additionally, the ongoing economic crisis has led to a decline in the number of new customers joining or rejoining

mobile networks.

Shahed Alam, chief corporate and regulatory officer of Robi, noted that the higher cost of SIM cards has discouraged consumers from acquiring multiple connections.

"This further complicates efforts to connect marginalised communities," he remarked, emphasising that rising costs have hindered access to essential communication channels.

The decline in mobile internet subscribers has already begun to impact e-commerce and online businesses, resulting in lower sales, reduced user engagement, and slowed digital adoption, according to Fahim Mashroor, CEO of Bdjobs.

"For instance, over the past year, Bdjobs has struggled to expand its user base," he said. "Internet-based businesses are already experiencing a downturn."

However, broadband subscriptions witnessed a modest increase.

Over the past seven months, broadband users grew by 5 lakh, reaching 1.40 crore.

As of January, the total number of internet users—combining both mobile and broadband—stood at 13 crore.

However, industry insiders caution that the actual number of unique subscribers is significantly lower, as many individuals access the internet using multiple SIMs.

According to BTRC regulations, an active internet subscriber is defined as someone who has accessed the internet at least once in the past 90 days.

Gold heads for gain on safe-haven demand

REUTERS

Gold prices eased on Friday but were poised for a weekly gain due to safe-haven inflows and a US jobs report revealing lower-than-expected job growth in February, suggesting that the Federal Reserve is on track to cut interest rates this year.

Spot gold fell 0.1 percent to \$2,906.04 an ounce as of 01.46 p.m. (1846 GMT). Bullion has gained about 1.7 percent so far this week, as US President Donald Trump's ever-shifting tariff policies fanned uncertainty.

US gold futures settled 0.4 percent lower at \$2,914.10. The US dollar index tumbled to a four-month low and is heading for its steepest weekly decline since November 2022, making greenback-priced bullion less expensive for foreign buyers.

"Weaker than expected number is giving gold a slight boost ... also a weaker dollar for the week right now is helping," said Bob Haberkorn, senior market strategist at RJO Futures.

A Labor Department report showed the US economy added 151,000 jobs in February, compared with a rise of 160,000 expected by economists polled by Reuters, whereas the unemployment rate stood at 4.1 percent compared with expectations of 4 percent.

Food prices responsible

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food inflation this quarter," the central bank said.

Non-food inflation decreased to 9.26 percent in the second quarter of FY25 from 9.50 percent in the previous quarter.

Energy, which had been a major factor in non-food inflation since mid 2022, has seen its share decline since the beginning of FY25. It contributed approximately 3.26 percent in December 2024. A year ago, energy prices accounted for 27.30 percent of overall inflation.

However, housing rental costs, particularly in rural areas, began to contribute more significantly from August 2024 onwards.

The report said the contribution of import-dependent items to inflation declined to 16 percent in December from 26 percent in September, as domestic items played a more dominant role in driving price levels.

"While non-food inflation showed a slight reduction, it remained elevated, continuing to exert pressure on households. The impact of imported goods on inflation declined, offering some relief, but domestic food and service prices remained high," the central bank said.

The central bank also cited that inflationary pressures continue to outpace wage growth, leading to reduced purchasing power.

In December 2024, inflation stood at 10.9 percent, while wage growth lagged behind at 8.1 percent.

"Despite these improvements, wage growth remained insufficient to keep pace with inflation, thereby limiting real income gains and sustaining pressure on household purchasing power."

US dollar sags after weaker-than-expected jobs data

REUTERS, New York

The US dollar dropped to multi-month lows against the euro and yen and fell versus most currencies on Friday after data showed the labor market in the world's largest economy slowed last month, creating fewer jobs than expected.

The report suggested that the Federal Reserve remained on track to cut interest rates multiple times this year. US rate futures on Friday priced in 78 basis points (bps) of easing this year following the nonfarm payrolls report, or about three rate cuts of 25 bps each, according to LSEG calculations. The first rate reduction is likely to resume in June.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell, in prepared remarks to the University of Chicago School of Business, did not really say anything new, repeating comments during his testimony before Congress and his press conference after the Fed rate decision in January.

He said on Friday the US central bank will be in no rush to cut rates while it waits for more clarity on how policies of the new Trump administration affect the economy.

The euro, on the other hand, continued its winning ways, poised for its best week in 16 years with a gain of 4.5 percent against the dollar, boosted by Germany's game-changing fiscal reforms. It hit another four-month peak of \$1.0888 after the jobs data. It last traded at \$1.0845, up 0.6 percent.

Against the Japanese currency, the greenback was flat on the day at 147.99 yen, after earlier falling to a five-month low of 146.94 yen.

The dollar extended its losses after data showed nonfarm payrolls increased by 151,000 jobs last month after rising by a downwardly revised 125,000 in January. Economists polled by Reuters had forecast payrolls gaining 160,000 jobs after a previously reported 143,000 rise in January.

Private sector credit growth

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"Panic has gripped investors in recent months due to the weak law and order situation," he said, adding that some garment companies have shut down recently.

Rahman, also a former chairman of the Association of Bankers, Bangladesh, said that around 10 banks have seen their lending capacity erode due to massive irregularities and scams, further impacting private sector credit growth.

Echoing those sentiments, a senior official of a private bank said that investors are unwilling to invest with an interim government in power due to political uncertainty.

"New investment in the private sector as well as industry expansion remain stagnant and everyone is now waiting for the national election," he pointed out. As of January this year, outstanding credit to the private sector stood at Tk 1,680,110 crore, according to central bank data.

BSEC standoff starts to ease

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Speaking to journalists after a meeting with stakeholders in Dhaka yesterday, Maqsood said he had directed officials to return to work and expressed his willingness to resolve the issues amicably.

"We have seen that many officials have already returned. We urged them on Thursday to resume work. If they do so, all is well," he said.

Operations would return to "business as usual," he added, saying the BSEC would investigate last week's incidents and take necessary action.

Top brokers, merchant bankers, and representatives from the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) and Chittagong Stock Exchange (CSE) met Maqsood and three commissioners to express their support.

Stock market stakeholders urged

BSEC to hold accountable those involved in last week's unrest, along with those implicated in corruption over the past 15 years. They also called for a conducive work environment for employees not involved in the protests.

DSE Chairman Mominul Islam told journalists, "What happened last week was unexpected."

He said that many officials work with integrity and deserve a workplace where they can perform their duties without concern.

"We have requested the commission to take action, and they have assured us they will," he said.

Islam reassured investors that the DSE and CSE would strengthen market monitoring to prevent further disruptions.

"Don't lose confidence in the stock market," he said, adding that reforms

would soon bring stability.

Islam voiced support for BSEC's ongoing investigations and anti-corruption measures, saying that the executive director was forced into retirement due to graft.

"If anyone disagrees with BSEC's decisions, there is a process to challenge them. They can even go to court if they wish. However, indiscipline is unacceptable," he said.

DSE directors Minhaz Mannan Emon and Richard D'Rozario, along with DSE Brokers Association President Saiful Islam, attended the meeting.

Although the market remained relatively stable during the unrest amid fragile investor confidence, the Dhaka Stock Exchange (DSE) lost 0.56 percent, or 29.51 points, to close at 5,174.44 on Sunday.

Telecom policy

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industry for machine-to-machine communication, digital services, software innovations, and Internet of Things businesses, he said.

"This flawed perspective has led to the misconception that reducing prices would inevitably shrink revenues for both companies and the government. The previous administration compounded the issue by layering misguided policies, creating a mounting crisis.

"In the name of digitalisation, the past regime introduced inconsistent, subpar, and globally misaligned policies," Taiyeb said.

The key question now is how Bangladesh can transition from a ready-made garments-oriented export

economy to a technology-driven modern digital economy, ensuring export diversification and sustainable growth, he added.

Mustafa Mahmud Hussain, a telecom policy expert, delivered the keynote speech. He said Bangladesh's digital progress depends on fair competition in the broadband sector.

However, monopolistic control over fiber infrastructure and outdated telecom policies have hindered the growth of internet service providers (ISP), limiting access to affordable high-speed internet. Addressing these challenges requires significant reforms, he said.


"The monopoly over the National Telecommunication Transmission Network (NTTN) must end," he added.

A tiered ISP licensing system would support small providers, while strict anti-monopoly regulations would help maintain a competitive ecosystem, he said.

Bangladesh must also focus on future goals, such as achieving 100 Mbps broadband for all households by 2030.

Encouraging next-generation technologies like AI-driven networks and IoT-based connectivity, along with partnerships with global tech giants, will drive digital transformation, he mentioned.

Expanding affordable internet access to rural areas through infrastructure development and government support is crucial, he added.



বাংলাদেশ মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি

রেজিস্ট্রার দপ্তর (সংস্থাপন শাখা)

১৪/৬-১৪/২৩, পল্লবী, মিরপুর-১২, ঢাকা-১২১৬, মোবাঃ ০১৭৬৯-৭২১০১০

ই-মেইল: regoffice@bsrmru.edu.bd, ওয়েব: www.bsrmru.edu.bd

বিজ্ঞপ্তি নম্বর: বিএমইউ/রেজি-৩৩৬/২৫/০১তারিখ: ০৯/০৩/২০২৫

সংশোধিত নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি

গত ১৩ জানুয়ারি ২০২৫ তারিখের বিএসএমআরএমইউ/রেজি-৩৩৬/২৫/০১ স্মারকের আলোকে দৈনিক পত্রিকায় ১৪টি পদের নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তি প্রকাশ করা হয়। একই স্মারকের আলোকে বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের ওয়েবসাইটে প্রকাশিত বিজ্ঞপ্তির নিয়োগ বিজ্ঞপ্তির ক্রমিক নং-১ এ উল্লিখিত সেকশন অফিসার পদের শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা থেকে “বাণিজ্য বিষয়ে স্নাতকসহ স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি”-এর পরিবর্তে “যেকোনো বিষয়ে স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি” প্রতিস্থাপন করা হইলো এবং বিজ্ঞপ্তির শর্তাবলির ১৩ নং কলামে উল্লিখিত “একজন প্রার্থী একাধিক পদে আবেদন করলেও যেকোন ১টি পদেই পরীক্ষা দিতে পারবেন” শর্তটি বাতিল করা হইলো। বর্ণিত বিজ্ঞপ্তির আলোকে যে সকল প্রার্থী ইতোপূর্বে আবেদন করিয়াছেন তাহাদের নতুন করে আবেদন করিবার প্রয়োজন নাই। তবে যদি কোন প্রার্থী পূর্বে আবেদনকৃত পদ ব্যতীত অন্য পদে আবেদন করিতে আগ্রহী হন তাহা হইলে আবেদন করিতে পারিবেন। এপ্রেক্ষিতে নিম্নবর্ণিত শূন্য পদসমূহে কর্মকর্তা ও কর্মচারী নিয়োগের লক্ষ্যে প্রকৃত বাংলাদেশী নাগরিকদের নিকট হইতে আবেদনপত্র আহ্বান করা যাইতেছে।

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রেজিস্ট্রার

বাংলাদেশ মেরিটাইম ইউনিভার্সিটি

Government of the people’s Republic of Bangladesh

Directorate General of Food

Movement, Storage and Silo Division

16, Abdul Gani Road, Dhaka-1000

Web: www.dgfood.gov.bd

e-Tender Notice (OTM)

Memo No. 13.01.0000.085.01.001.24-16Date: 09/03/2025

e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) for the procurement of following goods, details are given below:

Sl. No.	Tender ID /package no	Description of goods	Tender last selling (Date & time)	Tender closing (Date & time)	Tender Opening
1.	Tender ID: 1077815/01Silo/2024-25	Procurement of Rubber Conveyor belt and Bucket Elevator belt for Chattogram, Narayangonj, Ashugonj, Shantahar & Mongla Silo.	23 - Mar -2025 17:00 pm	24- Mar -2025 11:00 am	24- Mar-2025 11:00 am

This is an online tender, where only e-Tender will be accepted in the National e-GP portal and no offline/hard copies will be accepted. To submit e-Tender, registration in the National e-GP System Portal (<https://www.eprocure.gov.bd>) is required.

The fees for downloading the e-Tender Documents from the National e-GP System Portal have to be deposited online through any registered Bank’s branches up to 23-Mar-2025 at 17:00 pm. Further information and guidelines are available in the National e-GP System Portal and from e-GP help desk (helpdesk@eprocure.gov.bd).



(Md. Mahbubur Rahman)
Director
Movement, Storage and Silo Division
Phone: 02-41050696
E-mail: dmss@dgfood.gov.bd

GD-609

GD-616