

Three Nations Lead Billionaire Rankings

VOCABULARY WORDS

1. **Asset (noun)** /'æs.ɛt/: Something valuable belonging to a person or organization that can be used for the payment of debts.
Example: A billionaire's wealth is usually held in assets like property and company shares.
2. **Territory (noun)** /'ter.ɪ.tər.i/: (An area of) land, or sometimes sea, that is considered as belonging to or connected with a particular country or person.
Example: There are now 80 countries and territories with at least one billionaire.
3. **Overtake (verb)** /,əʊ.və'teɪk/: To go past something by being a greater amount or degree.
Example: India's economy is growing so fast that it may soon overtake other major nations.
4. **Benefit (verb)** /'ben.ɪ.fɪt/: To be helped by something or to help someone.
Example: Many tech companies benefited from the recent surge in artificial intelligence.
5. **Stagnant (adjective)** /'stæɡ.nənt/: Not growing or developing; staying the same.
Example: While billionaire wealth grows, ordinary salaries in many countries remain stagnant.



According to the latest financial data from *Forbes*, more than half of the world's billionaires originate from just three global powers. While the report identifies 80 different countries and territories that possess at least one billionaire citizen, a staggering 51% of these ultra-wealthy individuals are concentrated in the United States, China, and India. This trend emerges at a time when many ordinary citizens are struggling with the rising cost of living, creating a sharp

contrast between general economic hardship and the record-breaking increase in billionaire numbers.

It is important to clarify that being a billionaire does not necessarily mean having \$1 billion in a bank account. Instead, an individual is classified as a billionaire if the cumulative value of their currency, real estate, and other financial assets reaches \$1 billion or more. Currently, there are over 3,400 individuals worldwide who meet this criteria. The United States continues to hold the top position, hosting nearly 1,000 billionaires, including Elon Musk, who is currently ranked as the wealthiest person on Earth.

China follows in second place with 539 billionaires. Analysts suggest that the Chinese economy has significantly benefited from the recent boom in artificial intelligence and digital technology. The nation's wealthiest citizen is Zhang Yiming, a co-founder of ByteDance, the parent company of the social media platform TikTok. India ranks third with 229 billionaires, reflecting its rapid economic expansion. By the end of 2025, India successfully overtook Japan to become the world's fourth-largest economy, trailing only the US, China, and Germany.

Following the top three, the list includes Germany, Russia, Italy, Canada, Hong Kong, Brazil, and Taiwan. However, the continued accumulation of such vast wealth has led to growing public frustration in many regions. Critics argue that extreme wealth inequality is unnecessary and harmful to society. Consequently, there are increasing international calls for governments to reform tax laws, demanding that billionaires contribute a larger portion of their wealth to support public services and reduce the gap between the rich and the poor.

DISCUSSION

1. Do you think it is possible for someone to "earn" a billion dollars fairly?
2. How does the presence of many billionaires affect a country's global image?
3. If you were a billionaire, which "assets" would you prefer to own? (Property, stocks, art?)
4. Do you believe that extreme wealth inequality is a natural part of modern capitalism?
5. How should a government balance attracting wealthy investors with the need for fair taxation?
6. Which billionaire do you admire the most, and which do you admire the least? Why?
7. In your opinion, what is the "ideal" amount of money for a person to live a perfect life?
8. Do you think the AI boom will create even more billionaires in the next five years?
9. Should there be a legal limit on how much wealth one individual can possess?
10. If you had a billion dollars to donate to one cause, what would it be?