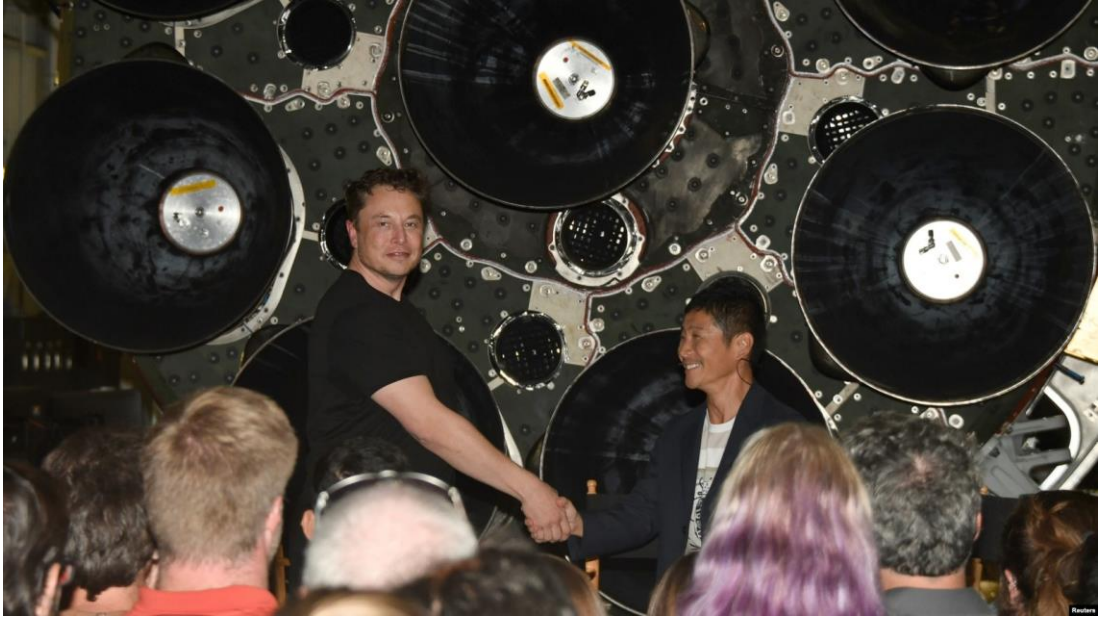


Report: Wealth Held by Billionaires Jumped in 2024

世界には、個人では想像しにくいほど大きな資産を持つ「ビリオネア」と呼ばれる人々があります。近年、世界全体で彼らが持つ富はさらに拡大し、国や地域によってもさまざまな変化が起きています。経済的に成功して大きな富を築くことは、一方で社会における公平さについて考えるきっかけにもなります。富が一部の人に集中することや、富裕層の税負担について、あなたはどのように考えますか。



1. Article

Read the following article aloud.

The Union Bank of Switzerland (UBS) Billionaire Ambitions Report for 2024 said the total number of billionaires worldwide had risen to 2,682 from 2,544 a year earlier.

Their worth increased to \$14 trillion from \$12 trillion. In 2015, their total wealth stood at \$6.3 trillion.

The World Bank says that the world's population was just over 8 billion, and its gross domestic product, or GDP, was about \$105.4 trillion last year. GDP is a measure of all the goods and services produced in a year. This shows that a very small group of people holds about 13 percent of the world's GDP.

Self-made billionaires

The UBS report for 2023 showed that new billionaires gained more wealth through inheritance than through entrepreneurship. But most of the year's new billionaires were self-made.

The 2024 report was based on a study of billionaires between June and September and wealth data on the super-rich. It showed the risk of international conflict and [inflation](#) were their main worries. The study also showed that most billionaires see North America as offering the best [investment](#) returns over the next year.

In the United States, the number of billionaires jumped to 835 from 751, led by industrial and tech entrepreneurs, with their total wealth climbing to \$5.8 trillion from \$4.6 trillion.

Wealth in China drops

In mainland China, the number of billionaires dropped to 427 from 520, and their wealth to \$1.4 trillion from \$1.8 trillion. In 2021, there were 626 in mainland China, together worth more than \$2.5 trillion, the UBS figures for that year said.

Benjamin Cavalli of UBS said the decrease was from losses in real estate markets in China. There was also a drop in the value of businesses owned by some of China's wealthiest in an undependable [economic](#) period.

India, the world's most populous country, saw its number of billionaires increase during the past year by over a fifth to 185. Their wealth rose by more than 40 percent to almost \$906 billion, UBS said.

In Western Europe, Switzerland passed Britain to become the country with the second-highest number of billionaires after Germany, increasing its total by 10 to 85. The British total dropped by one to 82, UBS said.

Germany with 117 (or 8 more), France with 46 (or 12 more), Italy with 62 (or 6 more) and Spain with 27 (or 3 more), all gained billionaires. The combined wealth of France's billionaires was highest among Europeans.

Jill Robbins adapted this story for Learning English from a Reuters report.

2. Key phrases and vocabulary

First repeat after your tutor and then read aloud by yourself.

1. increase (v.) to become greater in amount or number

The price of houses may increase next year.

2. wealth (n.) a large amount of money or valuable property

Most of the company's wealth is in the form of land and buildings.

3. inflation (n.) a general rise in prices

High inflation can make everyday goods more expensive.

4. investment (n.) money put into something to earn more money later

Kentaro made an investment in a small local business.

5. economic (adj.) related to the economy or the way money is produced and used

The two countries are trying to build a stronger economic relationship.

3. Questions

Read the questions aloud and answer them.

1. How many billionaires were there worldwide in 2024?
2. What were the main worries of billionaires in the 2024 study?
3. Which country passed Britain to become the European country with the second-highest number of billionaires?
4. Do you think it is a problem when only 2,682 people hold 13 percent of the world's wealth? Why or why not?
5. Compared to the average worker, should billionaires and their businesses pay taxes at the same rate, at a higher rate, or at a lower rate? Why?