



Global Mayors Dialogue opens in Luoyang

From dazzling light shows, ancient grottoes to advanced manufacturing, historic city showcases a path to modernization that preserves cultural roots **4**

China, Pakistan to hold first joint army training

China and Pakistan will hold the first joint army training conducted between the two countries in Korla, Northwest China's Xinjiang, in October **14**

Xiong'an turns urban waste into resources and green spaces

Through an underground waste treatment plant and smart recycling, China's Xiong'an New Area is bringing its "zero-waste city" vision to life, offering fresh ideas for greener, more livable urban development **8-9**

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Homegrown champion



China's Zheng Qinwen claims the women's singles title at the 2026 China Open on October 11, 2026, defeating Russia's Mirra Andreeva in the final. Playing in front of her home crowd, the Paris Olympic champion delivered a resilient performance to capture her maiden WTA 1000 title. (See story on Page 15) Photo: Cui Meng/Global Times

► Risk of 'simultaneous crises' in Red Sea, Strait of Hormuz increases

Attack on Riyadh airport sparks fears of wider Mideast conflict

By GT staff reporters

An attack on King Khalid International Airport in the Saudi capital Riyadh on Saturday afternoon has reportedly left 12 people dead and 309 injured, triggering reactions across the region and beyond.

The attacks came amid an escalation in Yemen, where

the Saudi-backed government forces are fighting the Houthis. Yemen's Houthi group has repeatedly targeted the airport in recent days.

According to a statement on social media platform X, the Saudi General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) said early on Sunday that the fatalities included four Saudi citizens

and eight foreign residents — two Bangladeshis and one each from the US, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Palestine and Sudan.

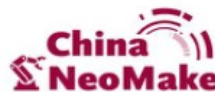
The injured are receiving necessary medical care at area hospitals, with some in serious condition, the authority said, adding that the material damage was still being assessed.

Chinese experts reached by

the Global Times on Sunday said that the escalation of hostilities, including Houthi attacks on Saudi airports, signals a new phase of intense confrontation, with the risk of simultaneous crises in the Red Sea and the Strait of Hormuz growing amid broader regional tensions in the Middle East.

2 Latest

Chinese AI tennis robots serve up new growth opportunities



By Chen Qingrui, Qi Xijia and Tao Mingyang

Chinese-made AI-powered tennis robots are serving up new business opportunities as China's growing enthusiasm for tennis fuels demand for intelligent training partners, while the sport is also emerging as a testing ground for advances in embodied artificial intelligence.

At the 2026 China Open in Beijing, robots capable of tracking incoming balls, moving autonomously and returning shots across the net drew curious spectators, offering a glimpse into how AI-powered machines could make tennis training more accessible and interactive.

From specialized training robots already reaching overseas markets to humanoid machines learning to swing rackets, Chinese robotics companies are exploring how advances in visual perception, motion control and AI can be turned into commercially viable products, while developing technologies with potential applications far beyond the tennis court.

Tennis boom

Chinese public's growing enthusiasm for tennis is creating new demand for accessible and flexible training solutions, particularly among recreational players who struggle to find suitable practice partners. While private coaching can cost several hundred yuan an hour in major cities, finding a fellow player requires matching schedules, locations and skill levels.

2 Rising

Port streamlines Hong Kong-Shenzhen customs



Employees work at the revamped Huanggang Port in Shenzhen, South China's Guangdong Province, on October 11, 2026. The port will officially open on October 12, offering 24-hour clearance services for passengers and vehicles between Shenzhen and the Hong Kong SAR. (See story on Page 4) Photo: VCG

Latest clash signals a new phase of intense confrontation: expert

► Attack, from Page 1

Reuters noted in its report that Saturday's attack, which is "the deadliest in the kingdom in more than a decade," occurred without warning.

Broader involvement

Previously, Houthi attacks on King Khalid airport on Thursday killed at least three Saudi citizens, including a pilot, according to the GACA.

The Saudi-led coalition in Yemen has vowed to respond firmly to the Houthi attack. Coalition spokesperson Turki Al-Malki said early Sunday on X that the coalition's Joint Forces Command would respond firmly to what he described as a "terrorist attack" in accordance with international humanitarian law, according to the Xinhua News Agency.

Following the Saturday attack, the Houthi group said in a statement that it was ready for reciprocal measures with Saudi Arabia to keep airports, seaports and other facilities with humanitarian functions outside the escalating military confrontation.

Liu Zhongmin, a professor at the Institute of Middle East Studies at Shanghai International Studies University, told the Global Times that the intensification of hostilities, including Houthi attacks on targets such as Saudi airports, signals a new phase of high-intensity confrontation, even as the underlying tensions between the US and Iran remain unresolved. In this case, the risk of simultaneous crises in the Red Sea, Persian Gulf, and Strait of Hormuz is increasing, the expert noted.

The attack drew condemnation and statements of concern from multiple countries. Foreign embassies in Riyadh, including those of the US,

the UK, Ireland and Canada, issued advisories on social media to their citizens in Saudi Arabia, according to Al Jazeera.

The Chinese Embassy in Saudi Arabia said on Sunday morning that no Chinese nationals had been reported killed or injured so far, urging Chinese-funded institutions and Chinese nationals in Saudi Arabia to remain firmly aware of potential risks, minimize non-essential outdoor activities, remain calm, and ensure their personal safety.

US President Donald Trump described the attack as "terrible" and said he "will be speaking" with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, soon, according to the Al Jazeera report. He also said he was evaluating whether the US should join the war against the Houthis.

"We may. We're gonna look at it. We just found out about the recent attack, so we'll make a decision. We'll move very quickly," he said, the report cited.

The moves come in the wake of the Makkah Joint Defense Agreement signed by Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan in August, which stipulated that any armed attack against one of the three countries will be considered an attack against them all.

Sun Degang, director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Fudan University, said that a more plausible scenario would be strategic-level cooperation between the three countries, including greater technical assistance to Saudi Arabia.

However, although the agreement is defensive in nature, Liu said that if the two countries militarily intervene in the Yemen conflict, the range of actors involved in the conflict would become even more diverse, and the

scale of the conflict will expand.

The US also faces a choice, Liu said. If Washington handles the matter in a low-key manner, more attention and resources will still be directed toward the strategic contest with Iran.

However, following the death of an American citizen, the US President may yet launch direct strikes against the Houthis, Sun told the Global Times. Despite Trump's reluctance to escalate the conflict in the Middle East, the US may be drawn in, potentially leading to further escalation.

From Hormuz to Red Sea

Since the US and Israel launched strikes against Iran in February, the focus of the Middle East conflict has been the US-Iran confrontation in the Gulf, Sun said. However, the recent focus has gradually shifted to the Red Sea, with Saudi Arabia and the Houthis emerging as the main parties. This shift from the Gulf to the Red Sea signals a potential escalation of the conflict, he said.

The expert added that the conflicts in the Middle East are interconnected. "The Houthis are supporting Iran in its confrontation with the US in the Red Sea. Whether it's in Gaza, Lebanon, Iran or Yemen, developments in one area can affect all other actors in the Middle East. A move in one arena can trigger changes across the entire region," Sun said.

A report from AP News highlighted that the attacks on Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil exporter, have rattled markets and the region.

Sun said that exports of fertilizers, energy and even helium could be disrupted due to the conflicts, posing a major challenge to global economic recovery.

Rising training needs drive robot commercialization, enrich real-world data

► Chinese, from Page 1

That gap is creating opportunities for AI-powered training equipment.

At this year's China Open, Acemate, a brand developed by Chinese robotics company OneRobotics, brought its latest S10 Pro tennis robot to the tournament as its exclusive designated tennis training robot supplier. The robot uses visual sensing to track incoming shots, moves autonomously and returns the ball to sustain rallies.

Huang Zihui, an Acemate representative, told the Global Times the company launched its S10 model last year to address one of tennis enthusiasts' most persistent problems: finding someone to play with.

Unlike conventional ball machines that deliver shots according to preset programs, the robot can respond to a player's actual shots, allowing users to practice continuous rallies without a human partner, Huang said.

Overseas demand has also become an important driver – the S10 has been sold to more than 60 countries and regions, with cumulative shipments exceeding 6,000 units – with North America, Europe and Australia emerging as major markets. In China, Acemate has expanded to more than 1,000 tennis courts through shared-use facilities and other arrangements, according to Huang.

The growing commercial interest comes against the backdrop of a broader tennis boom in China. The country's tennis-playing population reached 25.19 million as of 2024, up 28.03 percent from 2021, according to the General Administration of Sport of China.

A test of embodied AI

At an interactive area near the National Tennis Center's Yingyue Court, Chinese robotics company Galbot showcased a fully autonomous humanoid tennis robot, inviting visitors to rally with a machine capable of swinging a racket rather than catching and mechanically relaunching incoming balls.

The robot had previously appeared at the 2026 World Humanoid Robot Games, where it played tennis with former Grand Slam doubles champion Zheng Jie.

Galbot founder Wang He told Xinhua News Agency in August that the company's robot could already perform basic tennis skills, including serving, returning, retrieving difficult shots and executing lobs, as well as participating in singles and doubles play.

"Unlike specialized training devices, humanoid tennis robots must coordinate visual perception, trajectory prediction, body movement and racket control in real time, making tennis a demanding test of their ability to interact with a fast-changing physical environment," Chen Jing, vice president and research fellow at the Society for the Study of Technological and Strategic Trends, told the Global Times on Sunday.

Chen said these capabilities could be applied to industrial sorting, flexible assembly, warehouse picking, home care and security inspections. Their key value lies in enabling robots to perform tasks while moving, approaching dynamic targets, avoiding obstacles and adjusting their movements while maintaining safety and reliability, he noted.

For Chinese robotics manufacturers, sports allows these capabilities to be developed and demonstrated while also opening up commercial opportunities, Chen said.

