

INSIGHTS · 30 OCTOBER 2026

Jafza in numbers: *the trade engine behind Jebel Ali property*

Forty years after it opened with 19 companies, Jafza and Jebel Ali Port generate over a third of Dubai's GDP. Here is what that means for homes around it.

Image: Dubai Media Office

Jebel Ali Free Zone (Jafza) opened in 1985 with 19 companies next to the newly built Jebel Ali Port. It was the first free zone in the Middle East. Today it is run by **DP World**, hosts more than **12,000 businesses** and, together with the port, forms one of the largest trade and logistics hubs in the world. For anyone buying property in Dubai's south-west, from Palm Jebel Ali and Al Furjan to Dubai Investment Park, Jafza is the reason so many people live and work there.

Jafza *in numbers*

12,000+ BUSINESSES IN THE FREE ZONE (2026)	**157** COUNTRIES REPRESENTED	**100+** FORTUNE 500 COMPANIES
160,000+ PEOPLE EMPLOYED INSIDE JAFZA	**AED 713B** NON-OIL TRADE IN 2024 (+15%)	**36%** OF DUBAI'S GDP FROM THE JEBEL ALI ECOSYSTEM
74% OF DUBAI'S FDI IN MANUFACTURING, TRADE & TRANSPORT (2023)	**1 million+** DIRECT AND INDIRECT JOBS WITH JEBEL ALI PORT	

Sources: Dubai Media Office (5 May 2025), DP World (6 May 2025), Gulf News (19 May 2026).

Jebel Ali Port: *the gateway next door*

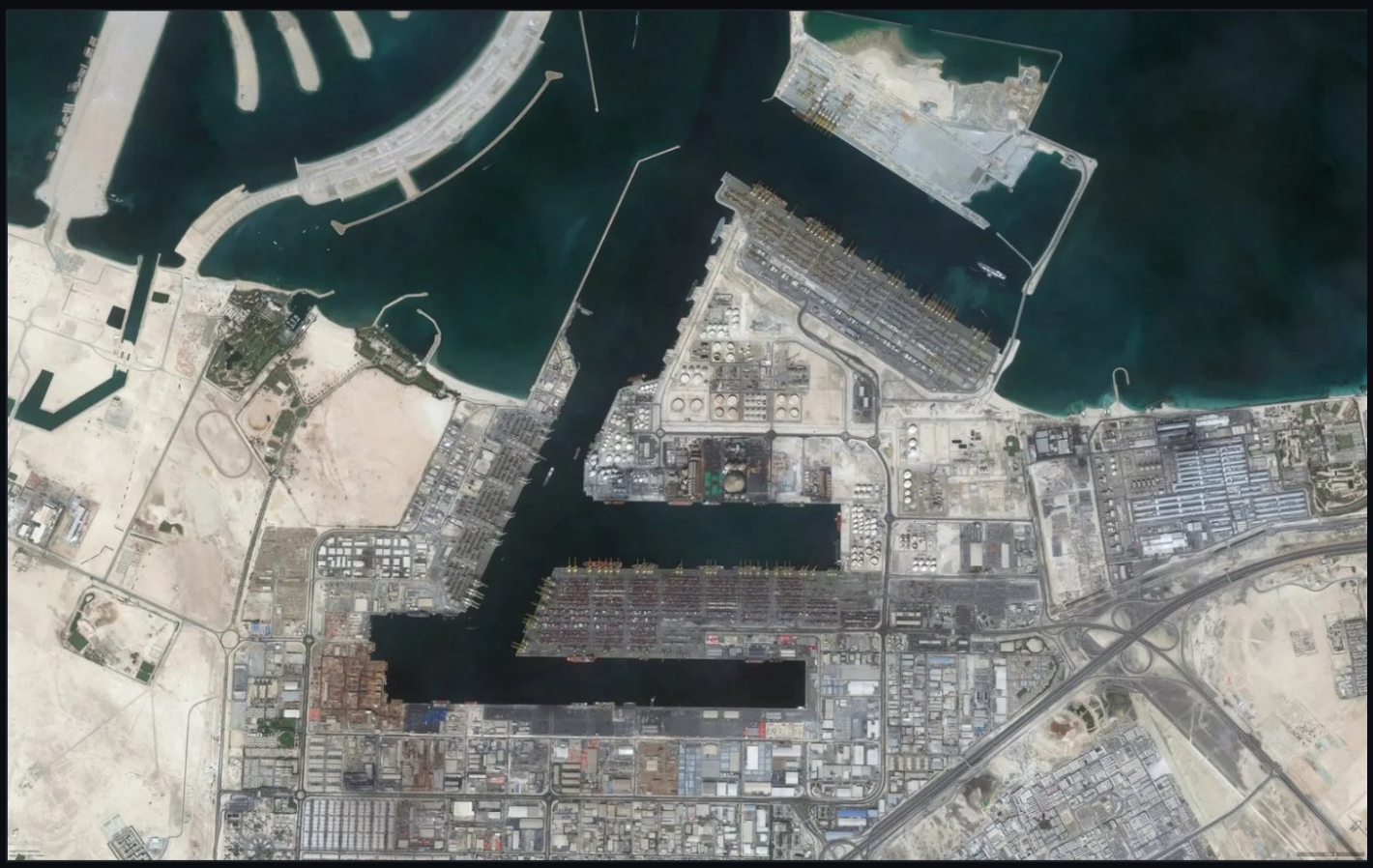
Jafza sits directly behind **Jebel Ali Port**, the largest port in the Middle East and the reason global manufacturers and traders base their regional operations here.

Containers handled in 2024	**15.5 million TEU**, up 1 million on 2023 and the highest since 2015
Capacity	19.4 million TEU a year across four terminals
Berths and quay	More than 100 berths along 25 km of quay
2025	Around 9% growth in origin-and-destination container volumes
Reach	Sea, air and road links to more than 3.5 billion consumers

The port connects by road to **Al Maktoum International Airport**, about 15 km away, so goods can switch between sea and air in hours. Read our article on **the airport's AED 128 billion expansion**.

Still *growing in 2026*

- In the first four months of 2026, companies committed **AED 854 million** to new and expanded facilities in Jafza, with more than 43% signed in March and April alone.
- The new investment covers manufacturing (steel, food, furniture), healthcare, third-party logistics, vehicle handling and heavy equipment.
- Over the past 20 years, Jafza has brought more than **US$30 billion** of foreign direct investment into Dubai.



Jafza is closely integrated with Jebel Ali Port, with Palm Jebel Ali just along the coast. Image: Dubai Media Office

Why it matters *for property*

More than 160,000 people work inside Jafza, and many more in the port, logistics and the companies that serve them. They need homes within a short drive, which keeps rental demand steady in the communities around Jebel Ali. Dubai Land Department data for **Al Furjan**, one of the closest residential communities, shows how this has played out:

YEAR	SALES TRANSACTIONS	MEDIAN PRICE PER SQ FT
2021	1,368	AED 699
2022	3,345	AED 823
2023	2,848	AED 980
2024	4,090	AED 1,164
2025	4,015	AED 1,349
2026 (to October)	1,784	**AED 1,414**

Source: Dubai Land Department transaction data for Al Furjan, all property types. 2026 covers January to October.

The median price per square foot in Al Furjan has roughly **doubled since 2021**, and the community offers a gross rental yield of around **7%**, with a median rent of about **AED 73,000** a year.

Where to buy *near Jafza*

- **Palm Jebel Ali:** Nakheel's new island, minutes from the free zone. See our Palm Jebel Ali guide.
- **Al Furjan:** an established community with a Metro station, popular with Jafza and port employees.
- **Downtown Jebel Ali and Dubai Investment Park:** mid-priced apartments close to the free zone and Expo City Dubai.
- **Dubai South:** between Jafza and the new airport. See our Dubai South guide.

Projects *to consider*



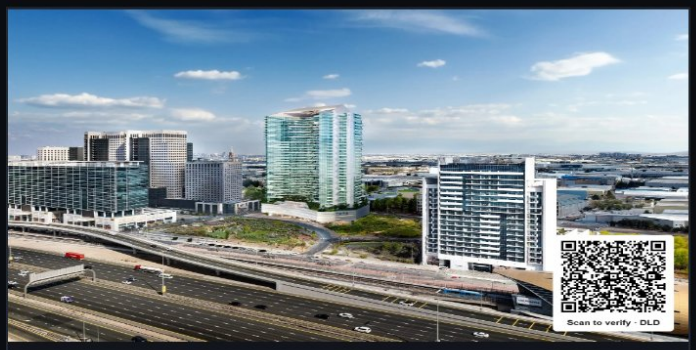
Palm Central Private Residences

Palm Jebel Ali



Reef 999

Al Furjan, Jebel Ali



Eleve Residences by Deyaar

Downtown Jebel Ali



DAMAC Riverside

Dubai Investment Park

Looking near *Jebel Ali?*

Ask for the latest launches, prices and rental figures around Jafza and Palm Jebel Ali.

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Sources

- Dubai Media Office, "Hamdan bin Mohammed highlights Jafza's significant contribution to Dubai's economy over 4 decades", 5 May 2025
- DP World, "Jafza turns 40 with record $190bn in trade", 6 May 2025
- DP World, "DP World records highest cargo volumes at Jebel Ali Port since 2015", 19 February 2025
- DP World, FY2025 results, 12 March 2026
- Gulf News, "DP World attracts Dh854m in investments at Jafza in first four months of 2026", 19 May 2026
- Dubai Land Department transaction data for Al Furjan, October 2026

This article is for information only and is not investment advice. Figures come from the sources listed and may change.
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