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**IIT Madras
Zanzibar**

SASISHO

The IITM Zanzibar Chronicle

A glimpse into the people, ideas, achievements, and moments shaping the story of IIT Madras Zanzibar.

March 2026 Edition

www.iitmz.ac.in/newsletter

CAMPUS AT A GLANCE

March brought a fresh start to campus as the new semester got underway and students returned to their classrooms and campus routines. Alongside lectures and academic work, the month was filled with new ideas, innovation, visits, sporting activities, and opportunities to connect with the wider community. From the RISE 4.0 Hackathon and the growing group of innovation teams to the first steps towards the JENGA Centre for Innovation & Entrepreneurship, March was a month of fresh energy and new beginnings at IIT Madras Zanzibar.

ACADEMICS

The March–June semester began on 2 March, with students returning to campus and classes getting underway across the BS and M.Tech programmes. Teaching continued largely in person, with some online lectures, despite the challenges in the region.



As the new semester got underway, students and faculty settled back into the rhythm of lectures, discussions, assignments, and project work. The academic programme was supported by both campus-based and visiting faculty, along with teaching assistants, helping classes move forward across the different programmes.

The new semester marked another fresh start for the IIT Madras Zanzibar community, bringing students and faculty back together for the months of learning and work ahead.

ADMISSIONS IN FOCUS

The admissions journey for the 2026–27 academic year gathered momentum during March, with outreach continuing for the BS and M.Tech programmes. As prospective students and families began exploring their options, the institute continued to share information about the programmes and opportunities at IIT Madras Zanzibar through outreach activities and webinars.



The month marked an important stage in the journey towards welcoming the next cohort to campus.

The M.Tech admissions process moved forward towards the screening test scheduled for April, while preparations for the BS admissions process continued, with the screening test planned for June across centres in India, Tanzania, and other major regions.



RESEARCH & INNOVATION

March brought several new ideas and initiatives into focus at IIT Madras Zanzibar. The campus jointly hosted the RISE 4.0 Startup Hackathon, bringing together university faculty and student teams from across East Africa for training, mentoring, and a hands-on bootcamp. The IITM Zanzibar team CarbonTrace went on to become one of the six finalists and received funding of £3,500.

The campus is also now home to four innovation teams working on solutions across different areas—from carbon tracking and voice-based identification to cargo scanning and AI-enabled maternal healthcare. Their presence is helping bring more experimentation and problem-solving into the everyday life of the campus.

Alongside these efforts, work continued on a number of larger initiatives, including pilot projects in water, energy, digital education, and AI-enabled healthcare. Plans also began taking shape for an AI Skilling and Innovation Hub, with a focus on developing AI skills across Africa and creating opportunities for school students to engage with emerging technologies.

The month also saw the first steps towards building the JENGA Centre for Innovation & Entrepreneurship at IIT Madras Zanzibar, with the campus's innovation teams engaging with the Centre for Innovation at IIT Madras to explore how the new centre could take shape.

From ideas emerging in a hackathon to solutions being developed by campus-based teams, March offered a glimpse of the innovation ecosystem taking shape at IIT Madras Zanzibar.



ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS

Academic work from the campus continued to reach wider platforms.

Research from the campus was accepted for presentation at **ICLR 2026** in Rio de Janeiro, while **Dr. Tushar Shinde** and **Dr. Hitika Tiwari** were selected for the GlobalSouthML Workshop at ICML 2026 in Seoul.

Another research paper, co-authored by Patrick Vincent Ndowo and Dr. Innocent Nyalala, was accepted for presentation at the 4th EAC Regional Science, Technology and Innovation Conference in Rwanda. The work explores the use of AI for automated clove quality grading using a Zanzibar-based dataset.

From global AI research to solutions rooted in local challenges, these achievements reflect the growing academic work emerging from the campus.



Paper Accepted at International Conference on Learning Representations 2026

Unifying Perspectives on Learning Biases: A Data-Centric Intervention for Holistic Fairness, Robustness, and Generalization

Affiliation
SAAIL Lab, Indian Institute of Technology Madras Zanzibar

Accepted at the Trustworthy AI Workshop at International Conference on Learning Representations 2026
27 April 2026 | Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Advancing fair, robust, and trustworthy AI systems through data-centric research.



Patrick Vincent Ndowo
M.Tech. Student



Dr. Innocent Nyalala
Faculty - ITMZ



PAPER ACCEPTANCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Deep Learning for Automated Clove Quality Grading: A Feasibility Study Using CNN Architectures on a Novel Zanzibar Dataset

About the Work

- Deep learning approach for automated clove quality grading
- Built using a novel dataset from Zanzibar
- Collaboration with Zanzibar State Trading Corporation (ZSTC)
- Focus on solving real agricultural challenges using AI

Impact

Advancing responsible AI for agriculture
Empowering local solutions with local data

Achievement Highlight

- Travel Grant Awarded: \$1980
- Supporting participation in regional AI dialogue

Acknowledgement

Grateful to the EAC STI community and IIT Madras Zanzibar for continuous support



Patrick Vincent Ndowo
M.Tech. Student

Dr. Innocent Nyalala
Faculty - ITMZ



Congratulations to Our Faculty!

We are thrilled to celebrate the achievement of Dr. Tushar Shinde and Dr. Hitika Tiwari on the acceptance of their workshop "GlobalSouthML" at ICML 2026 – one of the world's leading conferences in machine learning!

Seoul, South Korea | July 6–11, 2026

The workshop will be jointly organized by a globally diverse team of researchers from Tanzania, France, Brazil, USA, South Africa, Canada, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Australia, and India. It brings together impactful initiatives focused on empowering researchers from underrepresented regions in the Global South and advancing machine learning for developing countries, with a strong emphasis on inclusive, deployment-aware, and resource-efficient AI research.

A significant milestone, this marks their first ICML workshop building on the success of GlobalSouthAI @ AAAI 2026.

Kudos to the entire team for championing impactful, globally relevant AI research!



Dr. Tushar Shinde
Faculty



Dr. Hitika Tiwari
Faculty

CAMPUS, CONNECTIONS & COMMUNITY

Beyond classrooms and research, March brought plenty of moments for the IIT Madras Zanzibar community to come together. From cultural celebrations and shared meals to visits from guests and interactions with the wider community, campus life continued to grow in its own way.

Sports and student activities added to the energy on campus, creating opportunities for students to connect, unwind, and build memories outside their academic routines.

These everyday moments are gradually giving the campus its own character—shaped by the people who learn, work, and spend time here.





LOOKING AHEAD

With the semester now underway, the months ahead will bring more opportunities for learning, collaboration, innovation, and community-building at IIT Madras Zanzibar.

The journey continues, with new ideas taking shape and more milestones on the horizon.

For more updates

