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India, UK further collaborations in science and innovation

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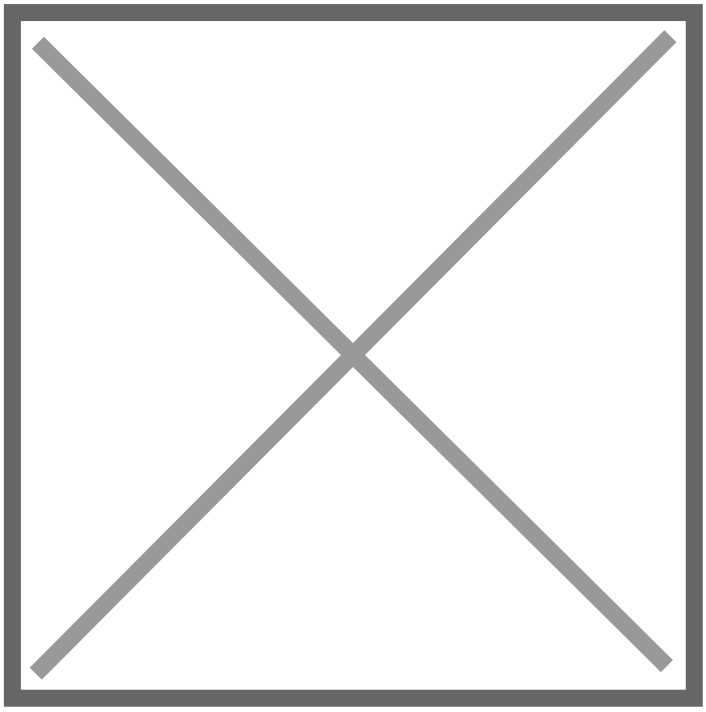

The UK and India are planning to scale-up the breadth and depth of bilateral activities in the area of science and innovation. The establishment of an "Indo-UK Science & Innovation Council" is on the cards, which will focus on building the work of the existing Science and Technology Joint Committee. The decision to expand science cooperation follows a visit to India by the United Kingdom's chief scientific advisor, David King in early February. King met India's science minister Kapil Sibal and senior officials of key scientific departments. The Council is expected to be launched by April 2006 and will include CNR Rao, the scientific advisor to the Indian cabinet, David King, and senior science officials from both countries.

There will also be a greater thrust on activities planned in the area of life sciences and biotechnology. "Both India and Britain are looking towards becoming knowledge-based economies. The UK science base is one of the strongest in the world and India has specialists in niche scientific areas where we could link up", said Sir Michael Arthur, the UK high commissioner in India. The two countries are exploring possible areas of collaboration on health issues, such as development of vaccines for HIV, tuberculosis and malaria, biotechnology, nanotechnology and stem cell research.