India and UK inaugurate a Genomics Centre of Excellence

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News

During the 8th India–UK Science and Innovation Council meeting (12 Oct 2026, New Delhi), Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Science and Technology, and UK Secretary of State Jonathan Reynolds jointly inaugurated the 'BRIC-CDFD – ONT India Genomics Centre of Excellence'. Its partners are the Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics (CDFD), Hyderabad, and the UK's Oxford Nanopore Technologies (ONT). Focus areas: rare diseases, cancer, infectious-disease surveillance and newborn screening.

Key facts

Centre	BRIC-CDFD – ONT India Genomics Centre of Excellence
Partners	CDFD, Hyderabad (under DBT's BRIC) + Oxford Nanopore Technologies (UK)
Inaugurated	12 Oct 2026, New Delhi – Dr Jitendra Singh, Jonathan Reynolds
Occasion	8th India–UK Science and Innovation Council (SIC)
Technology	Nanopore sequencing – reads DNA from changes in electric current as a strand passes through a tiny pore

Background

- Genome India project: Department of Biotechnology, Jan 2020; whole genomes of 10,000 Indians; data released on 9 Jan 2025 and stored at the Indian Biological Data Centre (IBDC), Faridabad.

- DNA fingerprinting was invented by Alec Jeffreys (UK) in 1984; its pioneer in India was Dr Lalji Singh (CCMB, Hyderabad). BRIC was formed in 2023 by merging 13 DBT autonomous institutes.
- India–UK: the 'Technology Security Initiative' (TSI, July 2024); 'Vision 2035' (July 2025, alongside the CETA trade deal).

Tamil Nadu link: IIT Madras was among the institutions in the Genome India project. Oral cancer, one of the centre's focus areas, is among the commoner cancers in Tamil Nadu too.

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