

Bangladeshi twins born joined at skull to undergo surgery

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Bangladeshi twins born conjoined at the skull will undergo a difficult and potentially dangerous operation to separate them, surgeons said Wednesday as they appealed for help from global medical experts.

Doctors are trying to establish whether the one-year-old girls, born otherwise healthy in northwest Bangladesh, share the same brain, something that would vastly complicate the surgery.

"It would be a very delicate and sensitive surgery," said Ruhul Amin, chief paediatric surgeon at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University in the capital Dhaka.

"We're evaluating their condition and trying to contact experts across the world for opinions and help."

Their [parents](#), both schoolteachers, came to Dhaka shortly after Rabia and Rukia were born, to seek medical help.

Amin said the girls were healthy and playful but he wanted more time to study their condition to minimise the risks of surgery as much as possible.

The parents did not even know they were having twins before the birth, with scans not revealing any abnormalities or indications of two children, said their father Rafiqul Islam.

"The doctor only said it was a baby with a bigger head," he told AFP.

The parents wanted to ensure "a better life" for their daughters—despite the potentially fatal ramifications of the surgery.

"Most people come to visit my daughters—either with sympathy or joke in their eyes—which is intolerable to watch as a father," he said.

"I want to keep my faith in Allah and the surgeons so that my [daughters](#) will have a successful [surgery](#) and eventually lead a normal life."

In rare cases, [identical twins](#) can be born with skin and internal organs fused together. About half are stillborn, and the survival rate is between five and 25 per cent.

In 2008 a baby born in Bangladesh with two heads died.

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