

Indian court rules against surgery on conjoined twins

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India's Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled out any immediate surgery to separate 17-year-old twin sisters joined at the head, citing the need for more expert medical opinion.

A division bench of the court said they had taken note of the fact the twins shared a vital blood vessel in the brain and that only one of them had kidneys.

"No positive direction can be given in the absence of an expert medical opinion indicating either of them can be saved due to a surgical operation," the bench said.

The court, however, ordered the government of the eastern state of Bihar to pay 5,000 rupees (\$92) a month to the parents to meet the twins' [medical expenses](#).

The twins welcomed the court's ruling.

"The court's verdict will provide us time to live together—like we have since birth," Saba told AFP in Patna.

Justice K.S. Radhakrishnan and Dipak Mishra revealed in their ruling that they had spent "sleepless nights" in seeking to arrive at a solution for the twin sisters.

"Seldom does society care or know the mental and [psychological trauma](#)

... (that) judges undergo, especially when they are called upon to decide an issue touching human life, either to save or take away," the order read.

Saba and Farah Saleem, who are mostly bed-ridden, hail from a poor family in Bihar with their father running a small roadside eatery in the capital city of Patna.

Their condition has drawn the attention of global medical specialists, with US [neurosurgeon](#) Benjamin Carson travelling to Bihar to study their case in 2011.

Carson had warned that surgery to separate the twins could be risky, following which the parents decided against any operation. Local media reports said they had even rejected a reported offer from the crown prince of Abu Dhabi to pay for surgery.

The ruling was the outcome of a public interest suit filed by a law student seeking financial support for the maintenance of the [twins](#) and to provide them proper medical care.

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