

Bhutanese conjoined twins in Australia for separation

2 October 2018

Conjoined 14-month-old twins Nima and Dawa from Bhutan arrived on Tuesday in the Australian city of Melbourne where doctors are planning complex surgery to separate them.

Elizabeth Lodge, chief executive of the charity that brought the girls and their mother from their Himalayan kingdom home, Children First Foundation, said the family was looking forward to the separation at Royal Children's Hospital.

The girls are connected at the lower chest and share a liver.

"Mum said the girls are getting a little frustrated with each other," Lodge told reporters.

"The girls are losing weight. They've been in hospital in recent weeks getting some extra nutrition so mum's really keen for them to get here," Lodge added.

They must undergo further scans to determine the surgical plan and its timing, with doctors predicting the procedure might take up to eight hours.

The hospital's head pediatric surgeon Joe Crameri said surgical team's aim was to separate the girls in a single operation.

"We know the areas we are going to have to focus on are the bowel and the liver," Crameri told reporters.

While his team will be prepared for complications, Crameri was optimistic about the outcome and confident the girls would live normal lives as they grow up.

"We just want to facilitate a good outcome for these twins to go home and live a normal life," Crameri said.

It will be several months after surgery before the

girls will be able to return to Bhutan.

"Their time on getting home will depend a lot on our ability to repair the abdominal wall because obviously they share skin and muscle," Crameri said.

The [girls'](#) surgery and recovery is estimated to cost at least 350,000 Australian dollars (\$252,000) which the foundation is confident of raising through community donations.

Nine years ago, surgeons at the same hospital successfully separated Bangladeshi 3-year-old sisters Trishna and Krishna, who had been joined at the head.

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