

CITY

Annual feast

On Saturday, thousands belonging to different religious orders came to Kandhal in the Nilgiris to participate in the annual feast of the Kandhal Cross Shrine. – Page 5

The age of robotic surgery



– PHOTO: K. ANANTHAN

*Incision-less surgery is a great development in medical science as it reduces considerably the trauma the patient will have to undergo otherwise. It is the patient's comfort that should be of primary concern to a surgeon, says **Guy Bernard Cadriere**, Chief of Gastro Intestinal Surgery, Saint Pierre University Hospital, Brussels, Belgium.*

An expert in laparoscopic obesity surgery, Prof. Cadriere has also experimented with robotic surgery.

*In Coimbatore to take part in a conference of gastro intestinal surgeons hosted by the PSG Institute of Medical Sciences and Research, he speaks to **Anasuya Menon** on the latest advances in gastro intestinal surgery.*

One of the most advanced developments that has

revolutionised laparoscopic surgery is the Natural Orifice Translumenal Endoscopic Surgery (NOTES), he says.

It involves the use of the natural orifices in the human body and eliminates the need for external incisions. An emerging area in laparoscopic surgery, the concept of NOTES has vast scope.

“It is extremely difficult to predict the possibilities of NOTES. It is a developing area and the results it can lead to can be phenomenal,” he observes.

The method has not been experimented with extensively in the Western countries or even in some Europe nations owing to the ethical concerns of the law-making bodies of those countries.

First experimented in India in 2003, NOTES can be a very challenging area for surgeons to work on, he adds.

“As it is really the beginning of this method, we require a specialised set of surgeons and extremely sophisticated equipment, which needs to be developed.”

In developing countries such as India, the cost can be another restricting factor, Prof. Cadriere points out. However, the cost will come down with the surgery becoming popular.

Robotic surgery is also a specialised area that is gaining popularity among laparoscopic surgeons worldwide. Laparoscopic surgery offers a very low degree of freedom for the surgeon and the access is limited.

“By introducing a robot in the surgery, the articulation is improved and the surgeon can navigate better. The use of robot in NOTES will be very interesting,” he says.

A convergence of robotic surgery and NOTES can revolutionise the entire concept of laparoscopic surgery, Prof. Cadriere feels.

Unlike in the past, people are now aware of the innumerable treatment facilities available to them. Access to the Internet has improved awareness among the public regarding diseases and treatment facilities and cost.

“It is easier for the doctor to deal with well-informed patients,” he adds.