About the photojournalist: SL Shanth Kumar

S.L. Shanth Kumar, the Chief Photojournalist at The Times of India, Mumbai, submitted his entry for the PII-ICRC Annual Awards 2024 with a compelling photo story. His series documents the remarkable journey of 33-year-old Prema Ram Choudhary, who lost both arms in 2008 after accidentally touching a live wire near his home outside Ajmer. Despite the severe injury that led to the amputation of both arms at the shoulder level, Prema’s story is one of hope and resilience.

The photo series captures Prema’s determination to regain his independence through a groundbreaking double-arm transplant, a first-of-its-kind surgery in India performed by Dr. Satbhai, a Plastic Reconstruction Surgeon. After a six-month wait for a suitable donor, a complex 16-hour surgery took place in February 2023, involving high-precision medical techniques to attach the donor arms. Prema’s journey highlights the transformative power of medical science and the critical need for organ donors in India.

The photo story was published across all editions of The Times of India in 2023.