

July 1, 2003.

We have just begun another academic year with school re-opening on 13th June after two full months of vacation. The children look forward to this long vacation as they can go to their native places and enjoy the beauty and freedom of the village life. You must be eagerly waiting for the progress cards of your sponsored children. So here they are. It takes some time for the children to hand in their reports and to write their letters especially the ones who have failed.

Of the 26 children that appeared for the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination, 23 were successful and 3 failed in just one subject. The successful ones are Alka Sarkania, Anand Patole, Dhananjay Dhattrak, Dineshchand Lohani, Ganesh Haldhar, Jitendra Kamble, Jonita Francis, Jennifer Patel, Lily Paul Gabriel, Neelam Mewarshi, Pammie Sharma, Patricia Rajan, Poonam Issai, Prashant Sose, Princey Varghese, Roopa Golekar, Rovina Vaz, Sheeba Kalandi, Shivshankar Mahatoo, Stella Suvarna, Vanitha Dhotre, Veena Rane, Vijaykumar Boni. The unsuccessful ones are Anthony David, Lucy D'Souza and Manohar Jadhav who will reappear for 1 paper in October.

Three students completed their studies through the National Open School (NOS) which is equivalent to the Secondary School Certificate examination. They are George Iridium, Julie Napoleon and Tina Pradhan.

Since a few sponsors asked for an explanation of the NOS we will explain how this came about. In the face of large numbers of school drop-outs and even College drop-outs, there was a strong need to enable 'differently-abled' children especially from the disadvantaged and marginalized sections of Society to progress. The Government of India and our own state Government thus considered the National Open School certificate for the Tenth standard equivalent to the regular SSC. The NOS is child-centred and not syllabus-centred and offers a very viable and sensible educational system wherein the child can opt for only one language from a wide choice of languages and can choose the remaining 4 or 5 subjects from a wide range of subjects including a variety of Vocational subjects. A child can thus drop whichever subjects he/she has a real problem with and choose subjects which could equip him/her with a skill to make a living. So thanks to this, many of our children are now completing their schooling.

The Southwest monsoon arrived at the southern tip of India on June 8, one week behind schedule, but progressed rapidly to cover most parts of India. Most of Bombay received heavy rains during the past week, providing relief from the sweltering heat and increasing the water levels. Unfortunately this is a very difficult time for most of our Staff and children as their homes are flooded with water and are even rendered roofless.

Visits to Prem Dan:

- *On May 16, 2003 Mauro Mingrone visited the Garden school but was unable to meet us.*
- *We used to see Peter van Wijk, head of Prem Dan Belgium, very often when he was a pilot in Sabena Airlines but with the closure of the Airlines, we missed seeing him and our other pilot friends. We were very happy that he could arrange a short trip to Mumbai with Els on June 16, 2003 and spend some time with us. It brought back pleasant memories.*
- *Due to the SAARS epidemic scare we missed some regular visitors to Prem Dan.*

Thank You for promptly renewing your Sponsorship. We are happy to welcome all our new Sponsors into the Prem Dan Family. May God bless you and your families.

Yours gratefully in Jesus and Mary,

Sr. Patricia Santos

Sister Felicity Morris and Sister Patricia Santos