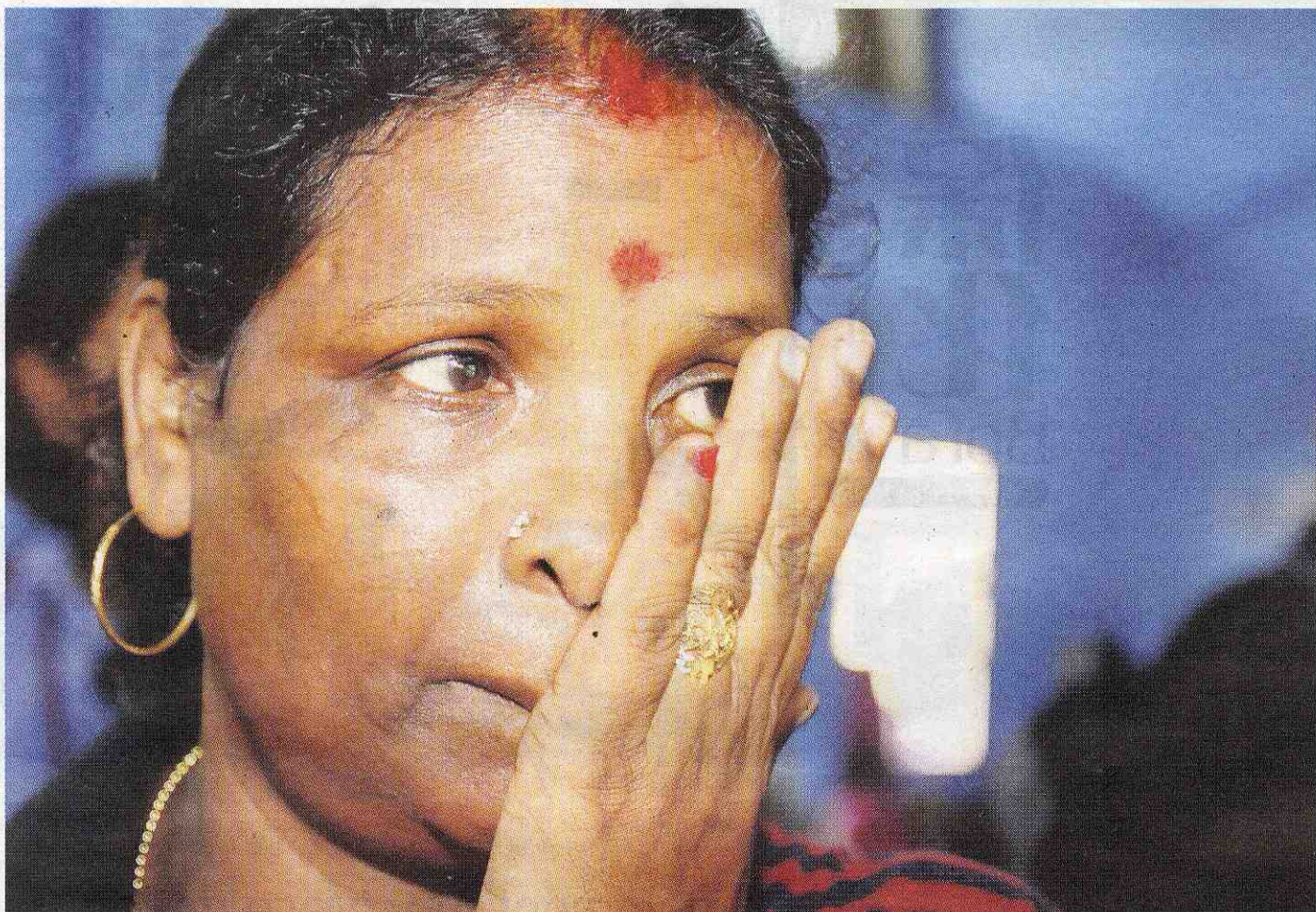


Flood of tears for family



Nothing left: Virimala wiping her tears as her family faces a bleak Deepavali at the Dengkil Community Hall.

Deepavali cheer and belongings swept away by rising waters

By **LEE YEN MUN**
yenmun@thestar.com.my

SEPANG: Housewife V. Virimala was looking forward to the Deepavali celebrations until a flood came and swept away all her belongings.

The 45-year-old and her family of five are among 148 families still receiving temporary shelter at the Dengkil Community Hall near here yesterday after rising waters forced them out of their homes over the weekend.

"My gas stove, washing machine, television, (tins of) *muruku* – the water swept these all away.

"Now, I don't have any new clothes – not even RM1. What can I do for Deepavali?" lamented teary-eyed Virimala to the Prime Minister's wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor during her visit to the evacuation centre.

Her husband, factory worker S. Subramaniam, 46, said he would not be able to go back to work until the mess at their home was sorted out.

"We have no choice now. Our

belongings have gone with the water," said Subramaniam, who earns RM25 at work every day. The couple has three children aged between nine and 13.

Meanwhile, as at 11.30am yesterday, the Welfare Department reported that two temporary shelters for flood victims in Dengkil were closed with 54 families being allowed to return to their homes.

Earlier, Rosmah, who is the Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Bakti) presi-

dent, handed over RM10,000 in aid for the flood evacuees.

The money was to be used for the purchase of necessities for the evacuees through Kasih, the welfare association of Selangor Barisan Nasional elected representatives' wives.

"As for Virimala and her family, the National Security Council has indicated that it will provide a small contribution to help them as Deepavali is around the corner," said Rosmah.