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Katrina of corruption

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No doubt, Jeddah municipal officials will issue a decree to set up a committee to investigate the disaster that struck the city last week. Every member of this committee will act as both a public defender and a prosecutor.

This committee will discuss the reasons behind the tragedy. First they will blame the sky for raining without warning. Then they will blame the floods for flooding. The dead, too, will be blamed for being responsible for their own tragedy, for daring to live in the low-lying Quw aizah district instead of the high-and-dry Al-Shatie. Why didn't they listen to the previous night's weather forecast? Why did they insist on living on ground floors? Why did they buy small cars instead of big ones like some officials who buy their vehicles from government money?

The esteemed committee will of course discuss the present situation of the city. They will consider turning the tunnels and underpasses into Olympic swimming pools, especially after we discovered that five of seven Jeddah residents can't swim. They will also consider turning some streets into canals for boats and dinghies so that Jeddah can compete with Venice.

The committee will, of course, have its serious side and it will ask where the authorities were whenwadis were being filled in to make space for more land. Where were they vis-à-vis the contractors assigned to build tunnels?

As promising projects are usually born from the womb of tragedy, we will sign new contracts worth millions of riyals to repair the streets and the drainage systems with the same old contractors.

Residents died; multi-million projects will be born. Such is the way of the Arabs since olden times. There is a silver lining in this cloud, in this Katrina of corruption.

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