

## Developing tourism

**Tourism requires a great deal of construction work and provides large numbers of entry-level jobs. Tourists may infuse additional money into the local economy through shopping. In nations where manufacturing is not developed, the tourism industry can be an essential method for reinvigorating local economies.**

MOHAMMAD SHAHIDUL ISLAM

**R**EAMS of paper have gone into writing about the prospect of tourism in Bangladesh in all the mediums of reporting. For the last three decades, we have been endeavouring to develop tourism, but the expectations have not always been met. The good news is that many high officials concerned with national development have recently come to understand the importance of tourism.

jobs. Between 2006 and 2015, tourism's growth rate is expected to be 4.6 percent on an average per year.

Tourism, on a national scale, not only can produce employment but also can be a major source of renewable export. It must be noted, however, that to be a renewable resource, tourism must be developed in a sustainable manner. That means where ecologies are fragile, numbers and activities must be tightly controlled; pollution must be checked, and local cultures pro-

that is not clean or unhealthy. Tourism cannot survive without a clean and safe environment. In a like manner, communities that do not provide pleasant surroundings and a clean environment have a very hard time attracting business.

Tourism requires friendly people and good service. No matter what the attraction may be, a tourism centre that lacks good customer service and friendly people will fail. In the same way, communities that offer poor service not only do not attract

country of thousands of villages. Most of its heritage sites and international tourist spots are positioned around villages. These are intended for education as well as recreation.

Sometimes rare plants or animal species are the main attraction, sometimes traditional food, handicraft or historic buildings. A European example of well-developed rural tourism is France. Camping and caravans are the most popular forms of accommodation in rural areas, many of them on farms. Many farmers have developed camping sites on their farms. Others prefer to invest in various kinds of short-term rental houses known as "gites."

Bangladesh has huge potential for tourism. The concept of community-based rural tourism and

development of Bangladesh. Its earnings will act as a vehicle for the overall development of Bangladesh. Development of rural tourism will have the following results:

- Increase in Gross Domestic Product.
- Human resource development.
- Poverty mitigation.
- Promotion of indigenous culture and heritage.
- Development of river tourism and eco-tourism.
- Development of rural livelihood.
- Protection of indigenous rights and resources.
- Education and training for all.
- Conservation of environment.
- Increase in local export.
- Peace and happiness.
- Promotion of local cuisine.
- Women employment, etc.

The government and community leaders may also want to take into account that tourism adds prestige to a community. People like to live in a place that others consider worthy of visiting. Such pride in one's nationality or community can become an important tool for developing the economy.

People sell their community's best when there is a great deal to see and do in it, when it is safe and secure, and when customer service is not merely a motto but a way of life. Community festivals, traditions, handicrafts, parks and natural settings all add to the desirability of a locale and its ability to sell itself to potential outside investors. The quality of life can also be reflected in a community's museums, concert halls, theatres and uniqueness.

Tourism is an important economic development tool for emerging and minority communities around the world. Since tourism is based on the appreciation of other cultures, tourism industries have been especially open to giving disadvantaged groups around the world opportunities that have often been denied to them by other economic sectors.

Tourism requires a great deal of construction work and provides large numbers of entry-level jobs. Tourists may infuse additional money into the local economy through shopping. In nations where manufacturing is not developed, the tourism industry can be an essential method for reinvigorating local economies.

Sooner or later, Bangladesh will be able to make the optimum use of its existing potential for tourism and, thereby, further develop its economy.

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## Words and reality

**I can mock my president as a buffoon; or scoff at the naïve social views set forth by Jesus in the New Testament, or consider Moses a con man. The slightest hint of restriction of freedom of the press or freedom of speech should be blocked at once.**

FORREST COOKSON

**O**VER and over again we are plunged into confusion by words. Words are used in contexts not only to provide information and truth but, probably most of the time, to stir up images and emotions also.

Too often, both speaker and listener convince themselves that the words are the reality! How many times have we heard presidents or ministers announce programs for which there was limited follow up, yet the announcer acts as though the words are the reality? How often does husband tell wife that something will be done and both believe the words? It seems that people actually perceive the words as the reality.

However, the reality always wins - the minister and the husband do not do as promised! Often, we are surprised by the reality, having believed in the words.

Consider a few examples. One is the view of the United States government about its military progress during the Vietnam War. Believing that their own words were the reality, the war came to a conclusion that surprised most Americans who had believed the words but not the reality.

Much the same has been experienced in Iraq. Governments constantly intervene to "protect" the public from information that would cause difficulty for the authorities. Many central banks deny inflation is taking place, despite the reality in the markets where people face rising prices every day. In the 1930s the British government persisted in claiming that the Nazi government was not rearming and had no aggressive intentions; believing their own words they took no action to stave off a war that resulted in the deaths of perhaps 100 million persons.

The words expressed what the British politician wanted to believe, enabling them to ignore reality. It is one of our endearing traits that we can substitute the words for the reality and delude ourselves. Listen carefully to what we are promised!

There is something more. Even when there is no significant dispute as to what happened, there may be different words used to describe this agreed underlying reality. Different words are used to shape interpretations of what actually happened. This is a kind of propaganda, not an attempt at scientific description. But these emotional words can shape the perception of reality.

When I moved to South Carolina to start university, I came from a background of great innocence about history and attitudes about controversial past events. I was confronted with a new expression,

"the war between the states," to describe the conflict between the northern and southern states of the United States in the 1860s. In the North this conflict is always referred to as "the civil war," and perceived as part of the United States attempting to declare their independence from the federal Union.

But in the South the preferred phrase is "the war between the states." The southern states continued to prefer this description long after the main issue was settled, as it legitimised their actions. The reality of this conflict is quite independent of the names used to describe it.

Conflicts between groups that have been joined together are always emotional and remarkably violent. To some in the southern states the expression "civil war" conveys something improper. Southerners preferred to think of the states as independent sovereign entities trying to escape from the domination of the north; while they lost the war their preferred expression conveyed validity to their uprising.

Remarkably, a similar dispute has arisen in Bangladesh over the terms "civil war" and "Liberation War." The difference in viewpoint is similar to that in the United States. If one sees the joining of East and West Pakistan as illegitimate then "Liberation War" is a nice way to put this. If one sees that there was a legitimate state, Pakistan, then the term "civil war" makes sense.

There seems to me no doubt that the foundation of Pakistan was an action in which the Bengalees gladly supported the emergence of a state whose legitimacy rested on the common commitment to Islam. Equally, the governance of Pakistan dominated by the elites and generals from the western wing was highly discriminatory towards the citizens of the eastern wing.

Separation to form a separate sovereign state emerged as an objective long after partition, and is legitimately described as "liberation" from oppression. The underlying reality of the way that East Pakistan was ruled is not changed by which phrase is used to describe the war of 1971.

Words sway us and raise emotional responses. Words are dangerous in the hands of the propagandist, as they are used to obscure the truth. While words may be used to cover or manipulate emotions, the reality always breaks through and controls the situation.

The reality of West Pakistan's repression of the East broke through and drove the Bengalees to fight for their independence. In the same way,

the secession of the southern states of the United States in 1860 reflected their belief that they could no longer accept the threat to their social and economic system; they believed the northern states exploited the foreign exchange earning power of the south and through high duties caused high prices for things purchased by southern states.

Of course, in the "war between the states" the southern states lost; the northern term "civil war" is generally used to describe that war, but in the south the former phrase continues to be used. In Bangladesh, the eastern wing obtained their independence and call the struggle the "liberation war" rejecting the term "civil war," which they feel grants legitimacy to Pakistan. So, to the winner comes the implicit right to establish the words to be used. But these are only words, and whatever they may be they do not change the reality.

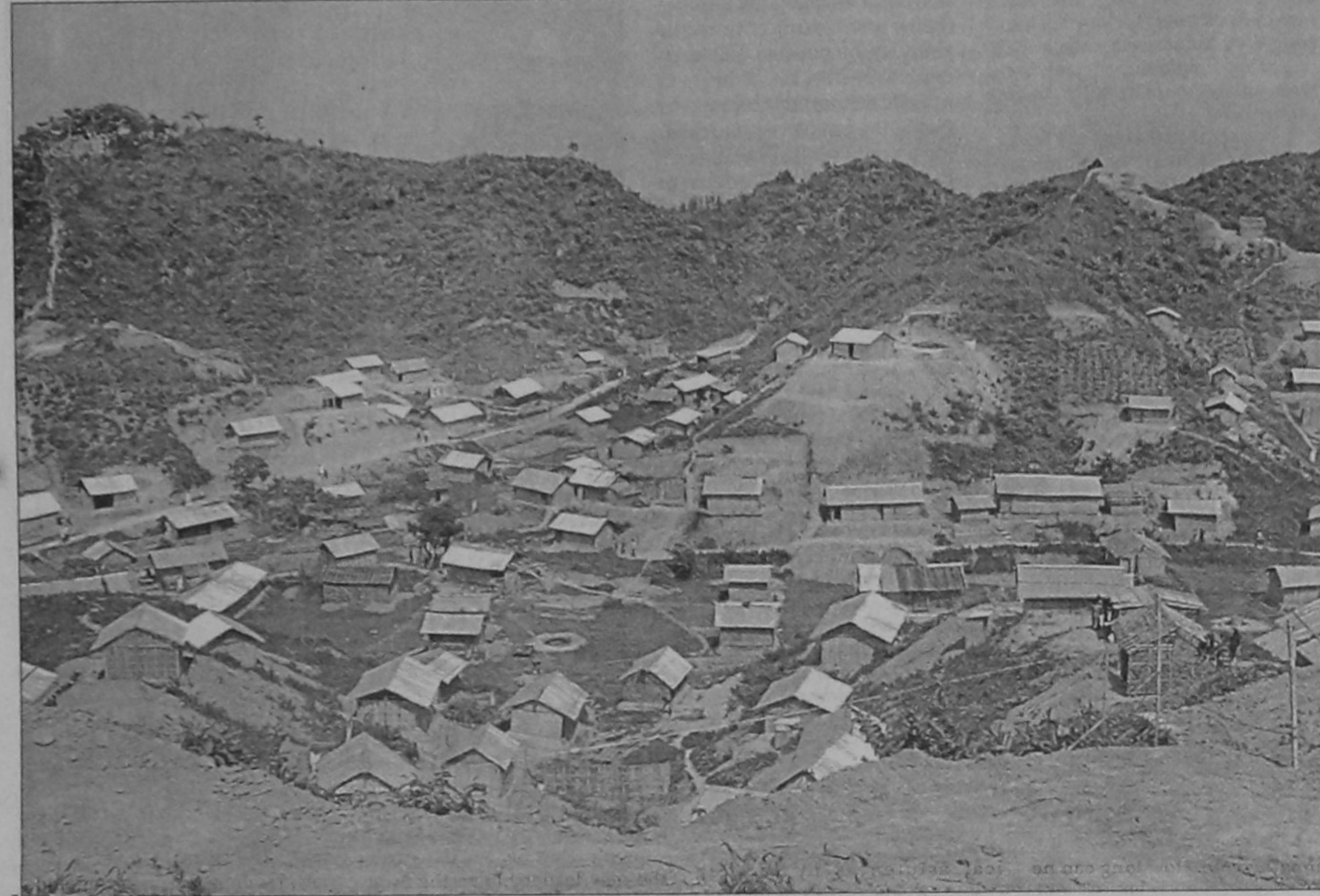
Is it illegal to use one phrase or the other? Certainly not! Words and their free use are the basis of any democratic system. But this freedom to use words is a two way street. Just as one should be free to use the phrase "Liberation War" or "civil war" to describe the events of the founding of Bangladesh so should one be free to argue the atheist views or to question some of the tenets of Hinduism or Islam.

Freedom of speech is freedom of speech, and there are no real limits to this freedom apart from slander or libel. Article 39 of the Bangladesh Constitution is clear on this (of course morality and decency are dynamic terms whose definitions are changing).

I can mock my president as a buffoon; or scoff at the naïve social views set forth by Jesus in the New Testament, or consider Moses a con man. The slightest hint of restriction of freedom of the press or freedom of speech should be blocked at once. Democracy can only prosper when citizens can say what they want to say, and not fear recrimination from the government, the religious institutions, or the general public.

The core of the secular argument against any kind of fundamentalism is precisely that everyone should be heard! It is deeply disturbing that some secular groups in Bangladesh seem to deny this core belief and, in effect, join the extremists. Tolerance of others' views is central to a democratic system.

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RAJANKI DRIK NEWS

Apart from this, tourism is the world's largest industry and a major source of employment and revenue. It also contributes towards conserving environment.

Tourism is the world's largest industry. There are some statistics to justify this assertion, especially for those who give more importance to facts and figures. According to the World Tourism Council, last year tourism alone produced over \$6 trillion in revenue. It provided jobs to around 221 million people globally.

It is expected that by 2015 it will be providing some 269 million

ted.

Tourism can add to the local economy in a variety of ways. These include revenue earned on spending by tourists in hotels and restaurants, conventions and meetings held, fares paid for transportation, etc.

Tourism and economic development go hand-in-hand. Think about what makes a place a good tourism centre. What are the essential ingredients of tourism? Here are a few of the essential points that tourism needs for its future growth in Bangladesh:

No one wants to visit a place

newcomers, but, in the end, have a difficult time holding on to their local population, young people and businesses.

Tourism requires good restaurants, hotels and recreational facilities. These are the same factors that are essential to any community seeking economic development.

Bangladesh can be an ideal destination for community-based tourism. For sustainable progress in poverty eradication, the present time is suitable for considering the implementation of community-based tourism. Bangladesh is a

its benefits are still unexplored. Now is the right time to think of rural tourism development. Apart from rural tourism, all general attractions, like archaeological sites, historical places, natural beaches are, more or less, getting importance.

But rural tourism can turn into a booming sector for at least two reasons. First, through rural tourism, Bangladesh may rid itself of poverty, and second, the infrastructure of far-off and rural places will be developed.

Community-based rural tourism is a must for the economic

## Daring to touch the third rail

**Many voters question whether Barack Obama is ready to be put on that pedestal -- and not just because of his dirty socks. "I don't see how Senator Obama has been up there (in Washington) long enough, as far as the array of contacts and experience he would need to be president," says David Mack, a representative in the South Carolina State Legislature who is a Clinton supporter.**

ALLISON SAMUELS

**W**ITH a who's who of the nation's African American power brokers looking on, Michelle Obama took the stage at the Atlanta Civic Center last week and explained why an Obama White House would best address their issues. "I know that the life I'm living is still out of the reach of too many women. Too many little black girls. I don't have to tell you this. We know the disparities that exist across this country, in our schools, in our hospitals, at our jobs and on our streets."

Her husband, the candidate, couldn't be there at Trumpet Awards, honoring the accomplishments of black Americans; he was campaigning in Nevada. But in a speech sprinkled with references to Martin Luther King Jr., she told the audience that "if my husband were here, he'd tell you that inequality isn't a burden we have to accept, but a challenge to overcome." She got a standing ovation.

They call her "The closer." As the race for the Democratic nomination turns to South Carolina and other Southern states, Campaign Obama is counting on Michelle to help close the deal with African-American voters. Obama has avoided being pigeonholed as the "black candidate" and has mostly steered clear of talking about race on the campaign trail (at least until

his recent fracas with Hillary Clinton over whether she besmirched King's legacy by noting President Lyndon Johnson's role in the Civil Rights Act).

But Michelle hasn't backed away from discussing her experiences of race and prejudice. At a November speech in Orangeburg, S.C., she drew a direct line between African-American women like Sojourner Truth and Rosa Parks and her husband's campaign. "These were all women who knew what it meant to overcome," she said. "These were all women who cast aside the voices of doubt and fear that said, 'Wait, You can't do that, It's not your turn.' The timing isn't right, 'The country isn't ready.'"

That frankness is playing well with black voters in South Carolina, where her husband currently leads Clinton in the polls by nearly 10 percent.

"When I speak with certain groups, I like to incorporate my own experiences, and they are African-American in many instances. So it's not planned, it just is," she tells Newsweek. Her performance is also tailored to her audience. "She's deft enough that if she's in a room full of women, she speaks more in a feminine voice. And if she's in a room full of seniors in Iowa, she speaks differently, talking about how important her mom is in her life," says one Obama campaign adviser, who requested

not to be identified discussing campaign strategy.

But it's also true that Michelle Obama -- raised on the gritty South Side of Chicago by working-class parents -- has more in common with most African-Americans than does her husband, who had a Kenyan father and a white mother, and was raised in Indonesia and Hawaii. Michelle's background gives her a "what you see is what you get" openness that allows her to tackle topics like race and gender, says Valerie Jarrett, who became Michelle's close friend when she started working for Chicago Mayor Richard Daley in 1991.

Intelligent and athletic, Michelle LaVaughn Robinson rose out of the inner city to attend Princeton University and Harvard Law School, then returned to Chicago to work at a law firm, where she wound up supervising an intern named Barack Obama. Because of her strong personality and her height (she's 5 feet 11), "a lot of guys didn't have the nerve to come up against that. But Barack did and she appreciated that," says friend Patrick Riley. In 1992 she became Mrs. Obama.

As the wife of the first African-American to stand a good chance of becoming president, Michelle Obama is understandably nervous about her husband's safety -- especially since last May, when the

campaign began receiving threatening letters and he was assigned Secret Service agents.

She says she gets lots of questions from African-Americans -- especially older ones who remember the assassinations of King and Malcolm X -- concerned about the safety of her husband, herself and their two girls, Malia, 9, and Sasha, 6. "I tell people something bad could happen, and I think about that. How could you not?" she tells Newsweek. "But something great could happen as well."

In her frank way, Michelle, 44, has openly discussed the tolls of the campaign on her family -- prompting a blast earlier this month from New York Times columnist Maureen Dowd, who wrote that the Obamas "radiate a sense that they are owed ... for offering themselves up to save and uplift the nation, even though it disrupted their comfortable lives." (Michelle says any suggestion of entitlement is "ridiculous.") She has also taken flack for talking publicly about her husband's little flaws, like leaving his dirty socks around the bedroom and not washing the dishes.

"Barack is only human, and by mentioning some of his shortcomings I was hoping to make clear that he can make changes in this country, but it has to be with the help of everyone," she says. "The more we put people on those types of pedestals, the more we welcome disappointment."

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enough, as far as the array of contacts and experience he would need to be president," says David Mack, a representative in the South Carolina State Legislature who is a Clinton supporter.

As an African-American, Mack acknowledges that "there's an element of racial pride associated with what he's doing." And as a result, "a lot of blacks are still torn. That's why there's still such a large block of undecided black voters."

Wooing those undecideds is a significant part of Michelle's job, especially in South Carolina, where some 10 percent of voters have told pollsters they haven't yet picked a candidate. "She has family there and roots there," says the Obama campaign aide. She plays well to Southern women, as the campaign discovered last May when she spoke at a Women's Day luncheon at Brookland Baptist Church in Columbia, S.C. "It

became very clear to me then that women felt a connection to Michelle down there," the aide says.

Evelyn Green, 53, of Norcross, Ga., who is African-American and will vote for Obama on Super Tuesday, Feb. 5, says, "I see Michelle and I think Barack has to be president, because I want her and those two girls in the White House." To that point, the candidate's wife says, "The most impor-

tant message we can send out is to show that we are a solid family with love and respect for one another. So many times you don't see that in the African-American community." By talking openly about such issues, Michelle Obama may well help that solid family move to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue.

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