

Sakib Khan wiped the sweat off his forehead as he pedaled through the crowded streets of Dhaka. The afternoon sun blazed overhead, but he had no time to rest. His rickshaw rattled over the uneven road, weaving between honking cars and hurried pedestrians. Each passenger he carried meant another meal for his family, another school book for his son, another day of survival.

Born in a small village in Mymensingh, Sakib had once dreamt of a different life. He was a bright student, always eager to learn, but poverty had a cruel way of crushing dreams. When his father fell ill, he had to leave school and start working in the fields. The little money he earned was never enough. When he turned eighteen, he made a difficult decision—to leave his village and come to Dhaka in search of a better future.

Life in the city was harsh. At first, he worked as a laborer at construction sites, but the irregular wages and backbreaking work made it impossible to sustain himself. That's when he found a job as a rickshaw puller. It wasn't easy, but it gave him a steady income. He rented a small tin-roofed house in a slum near Mirpur and brought his wife and son to live with him.

Every morning before dawn, Sakib would wake up, perform his morning prayers, and set out with his rickshaw. The streets were alive with movement—office workers rushing to their jobs, students heading to school, and vendors setting up their stalls. He greeted each passenger with a polite nod, always making sure they reached their destination safely.

One evening, as he was about to return home, he saw an elderly woman struggling to carry her bags. Without hesitation, he got down from his rickshaw and helped her. She smiled gratefully and gave him a warm blessing. Moments like these made his struggles feel worthwhile.

Despite his hardships, Sakib dreamed of a better life for his son, Rafiq. He worked extra hours to afford his education. "You will not pull a rickshaw like me," he often told Rafiq. "You will study and become something greater."

One day, as he was pedaling near Motijheel, a sudden downpour drenched him. He shivered as the cold wind hit him, but he continued. That evening, he came home with a fever. His wife, Amina, worriedly made him herbal tea and pressed his forehead with a damp cloth. "You need to rest," she said.

"I can't afford to," he replied weakly.

Days passed, and despite his illness, Sakib kept working. Then, one evening, Rafiq came running home, waving a piece of paper. "Baba! I got a scholarship! I can study for free!"

Tears welled up in Sakib's eyes. At that moment, all his sacrifices felt worth it. His struggles, his pain, his endless pedaling through the city's chaotic streets—it had all led to this.

Sakib Khan, the rickshaw puller, smiled. His son's future was brighter than his own, and that was all that mattered.