

# Mr Gay World 2015: Withdrawal, matter of shame for India, not Thahir Mohammed Sayyed | Latest News & Updates at Daily News & Analysis

Thahir Mohammed Sayyed

[Yogesh Pawar](#) | Wed, 22 Apr 2015-07:00am , dna

The way Mr Gay World (MGW) 2015 entrant from India, Thahir Mohammed Sayyed, was forced to withdraw from the pageant, barely days before arrival in Knysna, South Africa, has led to shock and outrage not only in the pageant administration, but also among international participants who say this reflects poorly on India at a time when the country is trying to assert itself internationally.

A shocked MGW president Eric Butter told dna, "We created this event to combat homophobia, but for a delegate and his family to go through such harassment is unacceptable and we have to be sympathetic with him."

"It is unfortunate that LGBTQ rights aren't accepted in one of the world's largest democracies," Coenie Kukuk, MD, MGW 2015 told dna, and lamented, "India reinstated a colonial-era law banning gay sex in December 2013."

He added: "We had no option but to accept Thahir's withdrawal. He was fully aware that there are risks and accepted it by entering, but to proceed under these circumstances is too much to expect from a delegate, especially since his family is drawn into it."

Kukuk's concern about the Indian delegate's situation was palpable, but he also saw the positive in the situation, adding: "Some good has come from this – debates about LGBTQ rights are enhanced. In that sense, the delegate has already succeeded."

Other pageant administrators speaking on condition of anonymity said that the circumstances of Thahir's withdrawal was a matter of shame for the Indian establishment, not him. "Understandably, there's been deafening silence on the part of India. Not that we expect any better from a government which only a month ago was among 43 countries at the UN that voted against benefits for same sex couples working for the UN."

Recalling how that resolution was defeated with 80 nations rejecting it and 37 countries abstaining, the official added, "In voting against gay rights, India already showed how it preferred the company of radically homophobic regimes like Saudi Arabia, China, Iran, Egypt, Pakistan and Syria. Its complete silence over Thahir's case only cruelly underlines this further."

## What participants will be evaluated on

While the seventh MGW finale will take place at Knysna on Saturday, May 2, delegates arrive in South Africa in the company of international MGW judges on Sunday, April 26. They will continually be evaluated on appearance, grooming, intellect, social skills as well as a written test on LGBTQ rights history, recent news events, an art challenge, sport and public speaking.

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