

# Indian 'Mr Gay World' Contestant Goes Into Hiding - theoutmost.com - Gay Ireland News & Entertainment

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### India's entry for Mr Gay World has gone into hiding after facing homophobic backlash.

28-year-old Thahir Mohammed Sayyed was set to represent the country at the Mr Gay World 2015 contest in Knysna, South Africa.

However, according to [DNA India](#), Sayyed and his family were not at their homes in Kerala earlier this week, and could not be reached.

A few days later, in a statement sent to India's newspaper [DNA](#), Sayyed said, "I am withdrawing from the contest. I hope the organisers appreciate the difficulties I faced. I cannot take this pressure. I have switched off my phone to prevent getting any unwanted calls."

He explained that he and his family have received threats and were even prevented from praying at their local mosque – the family has since gone into hiding.

Of his family's treatment, he said, "It would be unfair for me to drag them into any trouble."

Mr Gay World is an international pageant for gay men that was established in 2008.

"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," Eric Butter, president of Mr Gay World, told [DNA](#).

"It is unfortunate that LGBTQ rights aren't accepted in one of the world's largest democracies," said Coenie Kukkuk, the pageant's managing director.

In 2013, India's Supreme Court [reinstated](#) a law banning gay sex. The punishment for being caught engaging in homosexual behavior is life imprisonment.