

KESHAV SURI

b. April 6, 1985

INDIAN ACTIVIST

“Loving another man does not make me a criminal.”

He successfully petitioned the Indian Supreme Court to decriminalize homosexuality.

Keshav Suri is a prominent Indian activist and entrepreneur. He leads the The Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, which operates a chain of luxury hotels worldwide, and he founded India's celebrated LGBTQ-friendly Kitty Su nightclub. In 2018 his petition of India's Supreme Court ended in a landmark decision decriminalizing homosexuality.

Born in New Delhi, India, the son of a prominent hotelier and member of Parliament, Suri was bullied for being gay as a youth. As he matured, feeling the intense pressure imposed by a conservative, highly stratified society and his own family status, he considered marrying a lesbian to hide his sexual orientation. Ultimately unwilling to live a lie, he came out to his family and friends during graduate school in London.

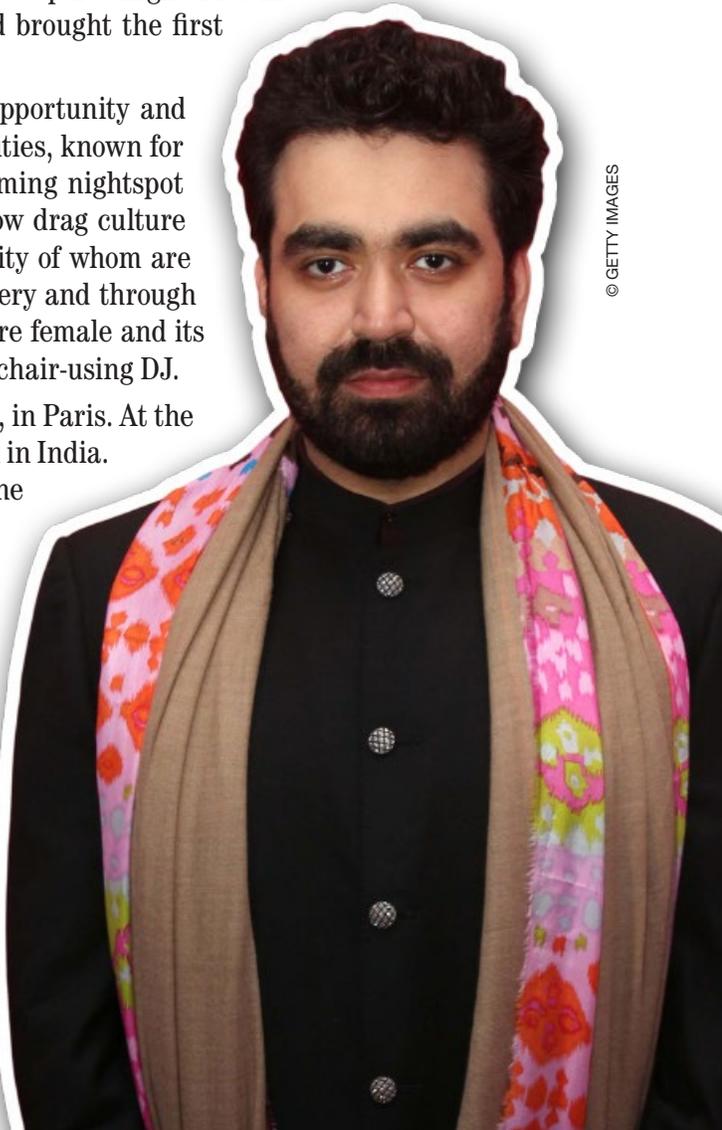
At age 21, after his father died, Suri learned the hotel trade alongside his mother and sisters. As executive director of the family business, he has spearheaded various successful ventures across the hotel chain, including the Kitty Su nightclub. Kitty Su is the only nightclub in India to have been listed by GQ magazine among the top six nightclubs worldwide and by DJ Mag among the top 100 nightclubs in the world. Suri also founded The Lalit Food Truck Company and brought the first pop-up party concept to India.

Suri uses his position as an influential businessman to create opportunity and inclusion for LGBTQ+ and other marginalized people. In Indian cities, known for their exclusionary club scenes, Kitty Su has emerged as a welcoming nightspot for LGBT and disabled patrons and has helped introduce and grow drag culture in India. Kitty Su also welcomes acid burn survivors—the majority of whom are poor women—who Suri works to aid, both in their physical recovery and through job opportunities. Under Suri's leadership, half of Kitty Su's DJs are female and its resident DJ, Varun Khullar, a.k.a. DJ Aamish, is India's first wheelchair-using DJ.

In June 2018 Suri married his partner of 10 years, Cyril Feuillebois, in Paris. At the time, the relationship alone—much less the marriage—was illegal in India.

In 2017, as one of four other activists, Suri filed a petition in the Supreme Court of India to repeal Section 377 of the Penal Code, which banned gay sex. Three months after Suri wed, the high court unanimously struck down the law, decriminalizing homosexuality countrywide.

Suri and Feuillebois live in New Delhi.



© GETTY IMAGES