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## Celebrating 60 years of independence

By [Thayumana Somasundaram](#) [Print](#) [Email to a friend](#)  
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About 150 people of all ages gathered Aug. 18 at Florida Heritage Hall to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Indian Independence Day, which was Aug. 15, 1947. The event was organized by the India Association of Tallahassee ([www.iathl.org](#)), a Florida non-profit organization devoted to the promotion of cultural, social and educational activities of people from South Asia.

**Srinivasa Kishore**, president of the association, welcomed everyone and introduced the guest of honor, **Venkateswara Rao Gade**, noted geophysicist from India. Children sang the Indian and American national anthems, followed by the unfurling of both the national flags. **Vivek T. Somasundaram**, a sixth grader from Betton Hills Preparatory School, spoke about V.O. Chidambaram Pillai, a famous Indian freedom fighter. **Subhasis Das**, secretary of the association, announced the winning logo for the association and thanked all the participants. **Manju Kundra** and **Ravi Chandar**, from the association's executive committee, ensured the smooth operation of the festivities.

The celebrations included a variety of entertainment program put together by two volunteer coordinators. Two middle-school students served as emcees. Children as young as four and five sang traditional Indian classical music. Participants sang Bhajans (songs of worship) and devotional songs praising Lord Shiva, Lord Krishna and Goddess Parvathi.

A young violinist played a western classical piece, and local university students performed vocal love songs accompanied by guitarists. The songs and music spanned several Indian languages, styles and traditions. The two-hour program ended with a distribution of certificates of appreciation and light snacks sponsored by the association.

All the association's activities such as Holi, Easter Egg Hunt, Azadi Diwas and Utsav 2007, Diwali 2007 and Glimpses 2007 (tentatively scheduled for October and November) are free and open to the public. To learn more about the association's current and future activities, check the Web site at [www.iathl.org](#) or send an e-mail to [mail@iathl.org](#). If you are interested in participating or volunteering, please contact any one of the executive members listed on the Web site.

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Srinivasa Kishore, left, and G.V.R. Gade at Indian Independence Day celebrations.

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