

Pettagam: India's First Private Museum For Chettinad Jewellery

Published on 23 Sep 2025 | By IFI Correspondent



A new private museum called **Pettagam** has opened in Karaikudi, Tamil Nadu. It is India's first museum solely for **Chettinad jewellery**, displaying rare pieces and motifs. Designer Meenu Subbiah founded it to document craftsmanship and layered history.

Why “Pettagam”?

“Pettagam” refers to the iron vault once common in Chettiars’ homes. These vaults stored valuables, jewellery — central to identity and tradition.

Exhibits & Experience

The museum spans **two floors** and combines multimedia narration with physical displays. Visitors see the birth of Chettinad jewellery, including origin stories and early motifs. One unexpected motif: the crab. It symbolises safe sea trade via the “crab route.”

Research & Revelation

Subbiah’s team spent **20 years** researching Chettinad jewellery tradition. They distilled a 50,000-word manuscript into immersive visual stories. Through study, she discovered many motifs’ deeper symbolic meanings.

Purpose & Future

Pettagam aims to raise awareness about jewellery’s heritage, not just aesthetics. It hopes to inspire similar heritage-celebrating projects elsewhere. Opening to public: first week of October 2025.

For more style updates & exclusive fashion stories follow indiafashionicon.com