

Bharti Wal-Mart joins hands with Government of Punjab to launch Training Institute in Punjab

Will initially offer Training and Certification to around 125 candidates per month; All enrolled candidates will be awarded 100% scholarships; Registration for membership by bonafide retailers and business owners in Punjab now open for Cash-and-Carry stores

Bangalore, Karnataka, November 12, 2008 /[India PRwire](#)/ -- Bharti Wal-Mart Private Limited (Bharti Wal-Mart), the joint venture between Bharti Enterprises and Wal-Mart Stores Inc for wholesale cash-and-carry and back-end supply chain management operations in India, today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Government of Punjab to establish a special skills training centre in Amritsar, Punjab. This Public Private Partnership has been forged with the aim of bridging the shortage of skilled workers for cash-and-carry and organized retail formats.

The skills training centre will be called the 'Bharti Wal-Mart Training Centre'. It will initially offer short-term vocational certification courses that will equip candidates to become Floor and Sales Assistants or Supervisors through a special curriculum developed by Wal-Mart, along with Bharti Learning Systems, who will also manage and run the Centre.

Recognized globally for its unrivalled expertise in retail, wholesale, supply chain management and peoples training, Wal-Mart is the largest private sector employer with over 2 million employees worldwide including 1.4 million in the US alone. Ranked number one on the FORTUNE 500, a position it has held in six of the past seven years, Wal-Mart has fostered a work ethic and culture which has helped its associates to rise above the ordinary and accomplish the extraordinary. The Bharti Wal-Mart Training Centre will draw on Wal-Mart's foundation of knowledge and deep expertise to develop a specialized curriculum for its courses.

Unemployability of youth is emerging as a major concern in India. Although most jobs on offer require vocational skills, most current education curriculums impart theoretical knowledge. Recent studies show that 57% of Indian youth -- 2.5% from Punjab alone -- do not have the opportunity to avail of training opportunities to make them employable.

Mr Raj Jain, Managing Director and CEO, Bharti Wal-Mart Pvt. Ltd. said, "Specialised operations like cash-and-carry and other organized retail formats promise good growth and job prospects, but they require a customer service mindset and very different skills from what is available today. The Government of Punjab is very progressive in its outlook and is firmly committed to providing an environment that promotes both employment and employability. We look forward to partnering them in this joint effort to bridge the skills gap and enhance employability. At a later stage when our Skill Centre capacity is fully utilized, we will explore the possibility of using classrooms at other ITIs/Polytechnics across Punjab to increase coverage."

The Bharti Wal-Mart Training Centre is expected to train approximately 125 candidates each month. Certification for floor assistants and sales assistant will be two week half-day programs with an additional week-long program for supervisors. Those opting for front-end retail jobs will be required to attend a week-long program. All enrolled candidates will be awarded 100% scholarships.

Designed to make the candidates job-ready through quick and practical training, the training methodology will use a 'See-Hear-Act' approach with intensive drills and hands-on practical experience. Certification will be based on written evaluations conducted at the end of the training program. As we progress, candidates will be co-certified by Bharti Wal-Mart and the Department of Technical Education, Government of Punjab.

Registration for Membership to Cash-and-Carry Stores now open in Punjab

Bharti Wal-Mart also announced that membership registration for its self-service cash-and-carry stores by bonafide business owners in Punjab, has begun. Scheduled to open in Punjab 2009, the Bharti Wal-Mart cash-and-carry stores will be open exclusively to business owners, not end-consumers. Offering the advantage of best fixed and fair prices with unmatched convenience, choice, quality and hygiene, the stores will be one-stop shops that

meet the day-to-day needs of traders, restaurant owners, hoteliers, caterers, fruit and vegetable resellers, kiranas, other retail store owners, offices and institutions. Between 50,000 – 65,000 business owners are expected to benefit from the membership.

A wide range of 6,000 to 10,000 products, including food and non-food items, will be available at favourable wholesale prices, allowing retailers and business owners to increase their efficiencies and lower their cost of operations. Over 90% of these goods and services are expected to be sourced locally thereby helping keep costs to a minimum, adding to the growth of the local economy and creating job opportunities, with each cash and carry store directly employing over 170 local people.

Mr Raj Jain said, "When we announced the JV in August last year we gave ourselves a window of 18-24 months to launch our first wholesale cash-and-carry store. We are firmly on track and we have begun registration of membership in Punjab in advance of the store opening to enable us to better forecast and serve the needs our commercial customers. The assortment, service and store layout of our wholesale stores will be customised to the specific needs of commercial customers who can walk in to the store and source high quality products in the quantities they need and at the time they require, all under one roof."

Kirana stores, otherwise hard pressed for space, can take advantage of membership at Bharti Wal-Mart's cash-and-carry store by using it as their warehouse, thus freeing up their capital for their businesses rather than lock it up in inventory. Hotel and restaurant owners can buy the best quality fresh produce on a daily basis including a wide assortment of fresh fruits and vegetables, dairy products as well as hygienically cleaned fish and meat. Special attention is being focused on hygiene and sanitation conditions both at the stores as well as by suppliers so that customers are assured about the quality and hygiene standards.

The Bharti Wal-Mart JV has already opened a Distribution Centre near Chandigarh and more distribution centres, each catering to facilities located within a distance of 100-150 km, are expected to be opened in due course. These Distribution Centres will service both the cash-and-carry stores as well as large retailers like Bharti Retail. The JV is expected to open 10 to 15 wholesale cash-and-carry facilities and employ approximately 5,000 people over the next seven years.

Notes to Editor

About Bharti Wal-Mart Private Limited

Bharti Wal-Mart Private Limited is a business-to-business (B2B) joint venture between Bharti Enterprises and Wal-Mart for wholesale cash-and-carry and back-end supply chain management operations in India to serve small retailers, manufacturers and farmers. The JV is scheduled to launch its first B2B wholesale cash-and-carry store in northern India in 2009. A typical cash-and-carry store will stand between 50,000 and 100,000 square feet and sell a wide range of fruits and vegetables, groceries, footwear, clothing and other general merchandise items. The JV is expected to open 10 to 15 wholesale cash-and-carry facilities and employ approximately 5,000 people.

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