

Google offers free website for SMBs

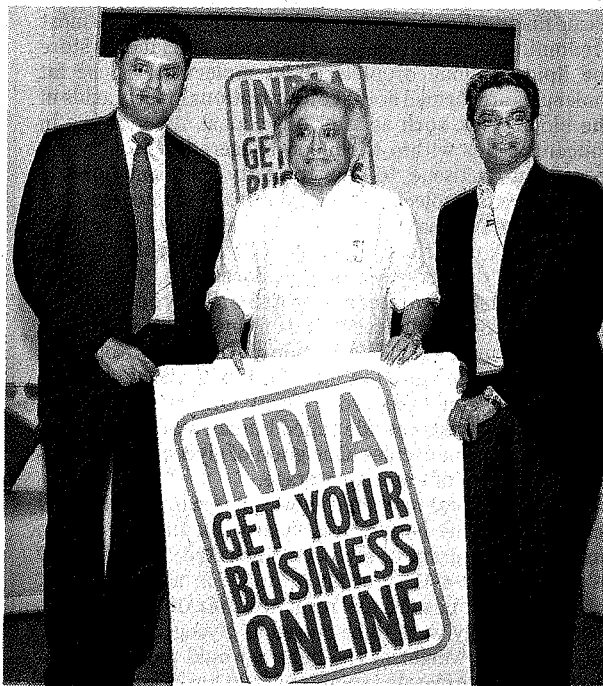
Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Google India on Wednesday launched a unique initiative to help small and medium businesses (SMBs) to get online with a free website, personalised domain and hosting. Called 'India Get Your Business Online,' it aims to break down the barriers that stop small businesses from getting online — by offering a quick, easy and free tool to set up and host a website.

"This programme is designed to bridge the information gap that exists online due to the lack of presence of local Indian businesses on the Internet. Our aim is to help five-lakh SMBs in India to get online in the next three years through this programme," Google India Managing Director and Vice-President (Sales and Operations) Rajan Anandan told journalists here.

SMBs can log on to www.indiagetonline.in and use the tool to get a free, easy-to-build website and web hosting for one year. After a year, website owners will have to pay a charge depending on the services they opt for if they wish to renew their domain name. Google has partnered website hosting company HostGator, ICICI Bank and the Federation of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (FISME) for the initiative.

According to Google Senior Vice-President and Chief Business Officer Nikesh Arora, "India is home to an esti-



EMPOWERING BUSINESSES: Minister for Rural Development Jairam Ramesh (centre) with Google Inc. Senior Vice President and Chief Business Officer Nikesh Arora (left) and Google India Managing Director and Vice President Rajan Anandan at the launch of 'India get your Business Online' in New Delhi on Wednesday.

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mated 80-lakh SMBs, but only about four lakh have an online presence...we want to change this. We are trying to make sure that there is a large ecosystem. Users coming online seek information and we are looking at helping people find utility in being online."

"We have received tremendous response to this initia-

tive in other countries and we are excited to bring this initiative to India and empower local businesses as more and more Indian users get online," Mr. Arora added. The Internet giant runs similar programmes across other countries like the U.S., the U.K., Australia and Italy.