

# 'NIRF' ranking system has to be objective, transparent and open'

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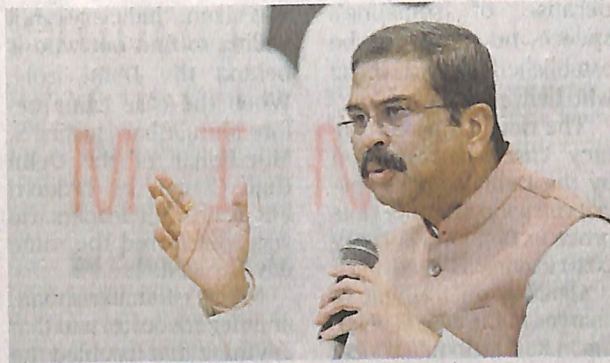
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NEW DELHI

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said that the National Institutional Ranking Framework's (NIRF) ranking system has to be objective, transparent, and open.

Addressing *The Hindu Mind* on Monday, he said the Union government was giving NIRF and the National Assessment and Accreditation Council (NAAC) institutions utmost autonomy. "But they have to function transparently. Democracy thrives in an accountable society. No institution is sacrosanct. They are autonomous, but they have to improve in their governance," he said.

Asked about his recent criticism of certain parameters of the NIRF, such as



Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan speaking at *The Hindu* MIND Series in New Delhi on Monday. SHASHI SHEKHAR KASHYAP

the perception criteria, Mr. Pradhan said the government was the custodian of students and society. "I have to put forth the societal expectation in front of these independent and autonomous bodies. They have to reform themselves, and they are reforming," he said. "These [institutions] all are doing good things. Before 2014, there

was no Indian ranking system. It was Prime Minister [Narendra] Modi who envisioned a national ranking system," Mr. Pradhan said, adding that making a viewpoint was not expressing dissatisfaction. "It is an indication for improvement. It is a governance issue," the Minister said.

On British company Quacquarelli Symonds's



global education institutions ranking, Mr. Pradhan said there was a quantum jump for Indian institutions. Commenting on the controversies over visa restrictions on Indians in the United States, he said India was not dependent upon any foreign institution. "We have to cope with the changing geopolitical situations," he said.