

Goyal defends big-ticket proposals

Lok Sabha clears Budget amid protest

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The Lok Sabha passed the Appropriation Bill and the Finance Bill on Monday amid protests by the Opposition over the Rafale deal, with Finance Minister Piyush Goyal defending the budgetary announcements.

The Interim Budget for 2019-20 was passed through a voice vote.

Criticism that the Budget presented on February 1 was a full Budget and not an Interim Budget was unfounded as no schemes were announced for the next year, Mr. Goyal said in his reply following a day-long discussion.

Two major schemes

The Finance Minister, in his Interim Budget speech, had announced two major schemes aimed at farmers and informal sector workers. The Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme, aimed at providing an income transfer to farmers, is designed to have begun from December 1, 2018. The pension scheme for informal sector workers – Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Mandhan – is to begin from February 15.

As both are starting in the current year, they cannot



Piyush Goyal outside Parliament on Monday. ■PTI

technically be classified as schemes launched for the next financial year.

“Some people are trying to belittle the scheme,” he added. “But maybe the ‘*namdaars*’ in their big houses do not understand how significant the ₹2,000 the farmers will get every four months is to them.”

Mr. Goyal said compared to the various pro-farmer decisions taken by the government, the Congress had over its 10 years in power announced only one pro-farmer decision and didn’t even allocate funds for it.

“This was still only an interim Budget,” Mr. Goyal said. “A full Budget would have much more announcements, and they would be for the next year. There were no schemes that were announced for next year.”