

# INDIA WALKS OUT OF RCEP, SAYS WILL HURT FARMERS

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: RCEP and India

Later in the evening, a joint leaders' statement indicated that despite India's "unresolved" outstanding issues, other countries were prepared to go ahead with the RCEP agreement.

"We noted 15 (of 16) RCEP Participating Countries have concluded text-based negotiations for all 20 chapters and essentially all their market access issues; and tasked legal scrubbing by them to commence for signing in 2020," the statement issued at the end of the summit said. "India's final decision will depend on satisfactory resolution of these issues," the joint statement said.

## No later entry

When asked whether India might consider joining RCEP at a later date, an MEA official said, "Not as the agreement stands today."

Sources said Indian officials, who had hoped for consensus on pushing the timelines on an agreement to next year, reacted angrily to the joint statement, and stormy scenes were witnessed over the wording.

Officials present at the meetings said India had tried to negotiate "in good faith" but felt that their views "were not being accommodated". They also accused the other nations of attempting to "gang up" in an attempt to force India to toe the line on issues like safeguards against flooding of Chinese goods, allowing Indian labour mobility to other countries for services, and agricultural and dairy tariffs.. Since 2012, there have been 28 rounds of negotiations that went right down to the wire over the weekend at the RCEP ministerial meeting, which ended inconclusively for India.

The note, circulated to the media shortly before Mr. Modi went up on stage to make his announcement, also said India was in the process of reviewing its Free trade Agreements with Japan, Korea and the ASEAN grouping.

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