

Jan Myrdal denies advising Maoists

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The Times of India said Swedish author and columnist Jan Myrdal, known for his close interaction with Indian Maoists since the 1980s, has denied advising the Naxals and supporting their armed struggle as claimed by the government.

India's home ministry planned to ban his visits to the country after they found that the Sweden-based author had attended pro-Naxal conventions in Kolkata, Hyderabad, Ludhiana and Delhi early this year and allegedly expressed support to the CPI(Maoist) ideology of armed struggle against the state

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"We are planning to put a complete ban on his future visits to India," a top official said.

But Myrdahl said in an e-mail to the newspaper that he was not as stupid to give political "advice" to Indian friends

"Government officials, in Sweden as elsewhere, seldom strike me as being very clever but this report from Delhi shows the present home ministry officials in India as unusually incompetent", Myrdal said in response.

"There was nothing strange about my visit to India this year. I had letters from my publisher and the Kolkata Book Fair, asked for and got a one-month conference visa to launch my book 'Red Star Over India: Impressions, Reflections and Discussions when the Wretched of the Earth are Rising'."