

WASHINGTON—A top Indian official on Thursday said that November elections in Burma may offer hope for the country's future.

“We've tried to engage with Myanmar [Burma] and to encourage Myanmar in what they themselves say is their attempt to rebuild democracy and to come back to the international mainstream,” India's National Security Adviser Shivshankar Menon said.

Menon was responding to questions after delivering a lecture at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a Washington-based think tank, on the November visit of US President Barack Obama to India.

The election in Burma "could be one step and a significant step in their transition, but I think we all have to work at it with the Myanmarese [Burmese] to see that it comes out right," Menon said, when asked about India's policy with Burma and the forthcoming elections.

Menon said India faces an insurgency in northeastern part of the country, where significant part of its border lies with Burma. Both India and Burma have common interest in the security of the area, he said.

In an apparent reference to their increasing economic relationship and India's interest in Burma's natural resources including gas and oil, Menon said India has also tried to work with Burma to develop their economy.

In the last couple of years, India has emerged as a key ally of Burma. In July, Snr-Gen Than Shwe made an official state visit to India.

Officials say that the Obama administration now supports its policy of engagement with the Burmese military regime and is in fact following it. Despite the fact that the US has imposed tough sanctions against Burma, in its new Burma policy announced about a year ago, it has had two rounds of dialogue with the military junta under its new engagement policy.