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## Russia seeks to expand Blue Stream gas pipeline

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Zaman Today reported that in a bid that many analysts are likely to interpret as a signal directed at Turkey, Mr Vladimir Putin, Prime minister of Russia, has expressed the possibility of working toward expanding the Blue Stream gas pipeline, which currently travels under the Black Sea to Turkey.

Mr Putin made these comments at a news conference after talks with Mr Mirek Topolánek, the prime minister of the Czech Republic, which is presently occupying the EU's rotating presidency. The talks were aimed at ending the stand-off between Russia and Ukraine over gas transit through Ukraine that has left a number of Eastern and Central European countries with acute gas shortages.

Mr Putin expressed interest in the construction of new gas pipelines, the Nord Stream, the South Stream and a possible expansion of Blue Stream and gas liquefaction, that is, the construction of a plant for gas liquefaction and the construction of a tanker fleet. The proposed expansion of Blue Stream would link to a Samsun Ceyhan pipeline currently under consideration and would also involve a branch to Southeastern Europe.

Russia supplies Europe with about 25% of the Continent's natural gas, most of which passes through Ukraine. A significant amount of Russian gas destined for Turkey travels through Ukraine as well. Another pipeline from Russia to Turkey travels under the Black Sea and is called Blue Stream, delivering 35 million cubic meters of gas daily. The pipeline is said to be operating well under capacity.

Russia's proposed expansion of South Stream, if actualized before the completion of Nabucco, estimated for 2013, would likely come at the expense of a Blue Stream expansion and the completion of Nabucco as it would bypass Turkey.

(Sourced from: Today's Zaman)

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