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Pipeline Privatization Planned

By The Moscow Times

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KIEV — Ukraine's government asked parliament on Friday to lift a ban on the privatization of gas pipelines that pump Russian gas to Europe, which could allow Kiev to sell or lease them to Moscow in return for cheaper gas supplies.

Ukraine, which is both a consumer and a transit nation for Russian gas, has long sought to negotiate a lower price for its supplies, saying the current price of over $400 per thousand cubic meters is exorbitant.

But Moscow says it will give Kiev a discount only if Russia's gas export monopoly Gazprom is allowed to take over the pipelines.

Last month, Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych had offered Russia a compromise solution in which a joint venture part-owned by Gazprom could rent the pipelines from the state.

(Reuters)

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