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Russia to Resume Ukraine Gas Flows

By The Moscow Times

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Under Ukraine's deal with Russia, the prepaid gas was to be delivered within 48 hours of the payment made on Sunday.

Ukraine's gas transport monopoly Ukrtransgaz said Monday that Russia would resume supplies of natural gas on Dec. 11 after a six-month gap due to a dispute over prices and unpaid debts.

Without Russian gas and hit by separatist violence that has disrupted its own coal mining, Ukraine has been forced to introduce widespread power cuts.

The Energy Ministry had expected flows from Russia to resume on Monday. Hard frosts have boosted consumption to record volumes in recent weeks.

"Russian gas will start flowing to Ukraine on Dec. 11," Ukrtransgaz spokesman Maxim Belyavsky told Reuters.

Ukraine transferred $378 million to Russia's Gazprom on Friday to buy a billion cubic meters

(bcm) of Russian gas in December. A Gazprom spokesman said the Russian giant monopoly had received the money from Ukraine and was ready to start pumping gas.

A cold snap is draining Ukraine's winter natural gas reserves, which have fallen by more than 20 percent since the heating season began in October to 13.3 bcm, Ukrtransgaz said Monday.

Energy Minister Voldymyr Demchyshyn said Ukraine was consuming more than 200 million cubic meters (mcm) of gas per day, 55 million of which came from limited domestic production, 120 million from reserves and the rest from so-called "reverse flow" supplies from neighboring European Union countries.

On Monday the Energy Ministry said it had granted state energy company Ukrinterenergo permission to import electricity from Russia to help address power shortages.

Turning to Russia for electricity supplies is a blow for Kiev, whose relations with the Kremlin are at an all-time low following Russia's annexation of Crimea and fighting in the east.

State power firm Ukrenergo said Monday that it had imposed further restrictions on electricity consumption to heavy industry and households to balance supply and demand. Ukraine estimate it is short of slightly more than 10 percent of the electricity it needs.

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