



Nord Stream Pipeline

For Prelims: Baltic Sea and its surrounding countries, Russia-Ukraine Crisis.

For Mains: Nord Stream Pipeline.

Why in News?

Recently, leaks were found in the pipelines comprising the [Nord Stream pipelines](#) (**Nord Stream 1 and Nord Stream 2**) located near Denmark and Sweden.

- The leaks happened just before the ceremonial launch of the **Baltic Pipe carrying gas from Norway to Poland, which** is an effort by Poland to **decrease its dependence on Russia for energy**.

What are the Nord Stream Pipelines?

- Nord Stream consists of two pipelines, **which have two lines each**.
 - Nord Stream 1 is a 1,224 km underwater gas pipeline running from Vyborg in northwest Russia to Lubmin in northeastern Germany via the Baltic Sea. It was completed in 2011.
 - **Nord Stream 2** which runs from Ust-Luga in Leningrad to Lubmin was completed in September 2021 and has the capacity to handle 55 billion cubic meters of gas per year once it becomes operational.
- The twin pipelines together can transport a combined total of 110 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas a year to Europe for at least 50 years.
- The Nord Stream crosses the [Exclusive Economic Zones \(EEZs\)](#) of several countries including Russia, Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Germany, and the territorial waters of Russia, Denmark, and Germany.
- In Germany, the pipeline connects to the OPAL (Baltic Sea Pipeline) and NEL (North European Pipeline) which further connects to the European grid.

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How War Impacted Nord Stream Supply?

- Russia had already decreased the supply of gas to Europe after the European Union imposed sanctions on Moscow for invading Ukraine.
- Flows via Nord Stream 1 were reduced to 20% of its capacity in July 2022.
- In August 2022, Russia further plugged the **supply and stopped Nord Stream 1 completely**, citing maintenance. Gazprom had reasoned that an oil leak in a turbine on the Nord Stream 1 pipeline was behind the closure.
- The Nord Stream 2, despite being completed, could not **become operational after Germany pulled out of the project after Russia invaded Ukraine**.
- The stream was supposed to double **Russia's energy export to Europe to 110 billion** cubic meters.
- The short supply of the gas pipeline resulted in a **sudden hike in energy prices in Europe**. With the shutting down of the Nord Stream pipeline, **Europe faces a tough time ahead with winter approaching**.

What is its Significance of Nord Stream for Europe and Russia?

- **Europe:**
 - Europe requires more than **100 billion cubic metres (bcm) of natural gas** each year

and around 40% of its gas comes from Russia.

- Over the last few years, Europe has become more dependent on gas imports because of a decrease in domestic gas production. Reducing dependence on Russian gas is difficult as there are no easy replacements.
- Many **European businesses have large investments in Nord Stream 2** and there is pressure on governments from these businesses. Finally, a reduction in gas from Russia would increase already high gas prices and that would not be popular domestically.

▪ **Russia:**

- As for Russia, which has the largest natural gas reserves in the world, around **40% of its budget comes from sales** of gas and oil.
- Nord Stream 2 is important because **it eliminates the risks related with sending gas through transit countries**, cuts operating costs by doing away with transit fees and gives direct access to its most important European customer, Germany.
- It increases **Europe's dependence on Russia** while giving it a reliable customer.

[Source: IE](#)

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