

Kanal Istanbul

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In news- The Kanal Istanbul, an under-construction shipping route, is fast gaining prominence as a major divisive issue in Turkey. It is being seen as a lifeline for President Recep Tayyip Erdogan in the 2023 elections.

About the canal-

- The proposed canal **connects the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara.**
- The project would cost \$15 billion, and would be 45km long and 21m deep, and would be constructed in six years.
- The planned canal will **run parallel to the Bosphorus Strait**, a natural waterway that separates Europe and Asia.
- Since 1936, passage through the Strait has been governed by the **Montreux Convention**, a multilateral treaty that allows ships to go across almost free of cost during peacetime, and which tightly restricts the movement of naval vessels.
- Turkish leaders say that the new canal, which will run on the European side of Bosphorus, will be safer and faster to navigate compared to the Bosphorus, making it a more attractive option for commercial ships, who will pay to pass through.
- Some of the project's fierce opponents have insisted that the Montreux Convention is sacrosanct and should be left untouched.



- They also fear the threat that the canal would pose to Istanbul's water supply system of over four centuries, as a wooded area that houses this system would have to be dug up.
- Another worry is that the new artificial canal would bring polluted waters of the Black Sea into the Sea of Marmara, and ultimately in the Mediterranean.
- However, the supporters have insisted that the canal would solve the Sea of Marmara's "sea snout" problem.