Danube’s Lowest Level

Prelims: *Current events of national and international importance | Geography*

Why in News?

Major waterways throughout Europe are experiencing severe depletion due to a persistent and extreme heatwave.

- **Dried-up Rivers** - The Danube, Rhine, Elbe and Loire have all dried up as the continent.
- **Key Impacts on Major Rivers**

The Danube	• Europe's 2nd -longest river has fallen to its lowest level in 30 years in Romania. • At Baziaș (where the river enters the country), the flow has dropped to approximately 1,700 cubic meters per second. • It is barely a third of its usual July average of 4,700 cubic meters per second. • This has resulted in exposed sandbanks, suspended ferry services, and idle grain barges.
The Rhine	• It is a critical European shipping lane for essential commodities like coal, oil products, grains, and minerals. • It has seen water levels drop significantly (hovering around 80–90 centimeters at the Kaub gauge). • Low water levels force cargo ships to sail partially loaded, drastically increasing transport and shipping costs for European industrial hubs.
The Loire and Doubs (France)	• Driven by weeks of intense heat, the Loire River was recently reduced to a dry riverbed with isolated pools in areas like Montjean-sur-Loire. • The Doubs River has also run completely dry.

Reference

Down to Earth | Europe’s biggest rivers are going dry

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