Kathmandu Declaration

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Why in News?

The 1st General Assembly of the South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN) was held in Kathmandu, in September 2026, adopting the Kathmandu Declaration to strengthen regional cooperation against wildlife crime.

- **Kathmandu Declaration** – It seeks to treat serious wildlife crime as transnational organised crime.

  Kathmandu *is the capital and largest city of Nepal.*

- **Focuses on** –
  - Intelligence and information sharing
  - Coordinated enforcement operations
  - Financial investigations
  - Anti-money laundering measures
  - Asset freezing, recovery and prosecution
- **Objectives** –
  - To move beyond merely seizing wildlife products to targeting the criminal networks and financial structures behind trafficking.
  - To cover emerging concerns such as bio-piracy and illegal access to biological resources.
  - To promote science, technology, innovation and research for wildlife-crime enforcement.

SAWEN Implementation Plan 2026-2030

- **Priority areas** –
  - Regional enforcement and intelligence cooperation
  - Criminal-justice responses
  - Capacity building
  - Marine and freshwater wildlife crime
  - International cooperation
  - Research and knowledge management
  - Demand reduction
  - Institutional strengthening

About South Asia Wildlife Enforcement Network (SAWEN)

- **SAWEN** – It is a regional intergovernmental mechanism for preventing and combating illegal wildlife trade.
- **Formally launched in** – Bhutan in 2011.
- **Members** – India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, Pakistan and Afghanistan.
- **Headquarters** – Kathmandu, Nepal.

Other Important Facts

- 30 January will be observed annually as **SAWEN Day.**
  - It commemorates the network's formal launch in Bhutan in 2011.
- The Assembly also endorsed a three-year programme of work and budget for 2026/27–2028/29.

Zero Poaching Toolkit 2026 *was released during the SAWEN General Assembly.*

Reference

National Herald India| Kathmandu Declaration

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