

Sloth bear

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In news—Two full-grown sloth bears were rescued by forest officials in Jharkhand from **Nomadic community members, popularly known as 'madaris** (earn a living by performing street acts with animals), following the intervention of politician-cum-animal rights activist Maneka Gandhi.

About Sloth bear-

- The **sloth bear is a myrmecophagous bear species native to the Indian subcontinent.**
- It feeds on fruits, ants and termites.
- It has also been **called "labiated bear"** because of its long lower lip and palate used for sucking up insects.
- It has a long, shaggy fur, a mane around the face, and long, sickle-shaped claws.
- It **shares features of insectivorous mammals** and evolved during the Pleistocene from the ancestral brown bear.
- **Sloth bears breed during spring and early summer and give birth near the beginning of winter.**
- Indian sloth bear(big) and Sri Lankan(small) sloth bear are the two subspecies of Sloth bears.
- When their territories are encroached upon by humans, they sometimes attack them.
- Historically, humans have drastically reduced these bears' habitat and diminished their population by hunting them for food and products such as their bacula and claws.
- Sloth bears have been tamed and used as performing animals and as pets.



- **It is listed as vulnerable on the IUCN Red List**, mainly because of habitat loss and degradation.
- In India, they are protected under Schedule-1 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972.