Match-fixing

What is the issue?

- Match-fixing is not an independent offence in India.
- There is a need for a separate law that would punish the match-fixers.

What is the CBI's definition of match-fixing?

- The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has defined the following as the instances, which are to be treated as match-fixing.
- Instances where an individual player or group of players received money to underperform;
- Instances where a player placed bets in matches in which he played that would naturally undermine his performance;
- Instances where players passed on information to a betting syndicate;
- Instances where grounds men were given money to prepare a pitch in a way that suited the betting syndicates; and
- Instances of current and ex-players being used by bookies to gain access to players to influence their performances for a monetary consideration.

Is there a law against match-fixing in India?

- Match-fixing is not an independent offence in India and there are no laws covering it.
- Investigating authorities mostly try to book the accused for cheating under Section 420 of the IPC.
- Other laws like the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 have been used.
- After every match-fixing scandal, investigators, legislators and lawyers have called for reforms.
- They argue that the absence of laws makes it difficult for them to incriminate someone for match-fixing.

How have alleged match-fixers been punished in the past?

- Punishments were handed out by the cricket board under its anti-corruption rules.
- These punishments, too, were later reduced or overturned by courts.
- In fact, lawyers use these cases to illustrate the need to have separate, foolproof laws for match-fixing.

What powers do the investigators have?

- They have all the powers to collect evidence if it is available.
- However, there has to be an offence to investigate.
- Since match-fixing is not defined as an offence, it is difficult to bring it under the domain of Section 420 of the IPC.

Have there been attempts to make laws against match-fixing?

- In 2013, the Ministry of Sports drafted the Prevention of Sporting Fraud Bill that suggested a jail term for offenders.
- Two Private Member's Bills too were introduced in the Lok Sabha,
    a. In 2016, Anurag Thakur introduced National Sports Ethics Commission Bill and
    b. In 2018, Shashi Tharoor introduced the Sports (Online Gaming and Prevention of Fraud) Bill.
- Neither has been debated yet.

Source: The Indian Express

