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## 420 IPC Movie Review: A Courtroom Drama That Despite an Able Vinay Pathak Faltters



420 IPC, out now on ZEE5, seems like a bad copy of Jolly LLB with largely unimpressive performances from Ranvir Shorey and Rohan Vinod Mehra.

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420 IPC, starring Vinay Pathak and Ranvir Shorey, runs more or less parallel to Jolly LLB, but largely unimpressive performances make it worse.

**4** 20 IPC  
Director: Manish Gupta

**Cast:** Vinay Pathak, Ranvir Shorey, Gul Panag, Rohan Vinod Mehra

Indian cinema has this habit of latching on to a successful work and beat the theme to pulp. Manish Gupta's latest outing on ZEE5, 420 IPC (Indian Penal Code), runs more or less parallel to Jolly LLB – a gripping take on how a hit-and-run case on a Mumbai road is argued and sorted out in court with two lawyers, Arshad Warsi and the more illustrious Boman Irani, battling it out. Yes, 420 IPC is not about an on-road misdemeanour; rather it is about a man accused of forgery.

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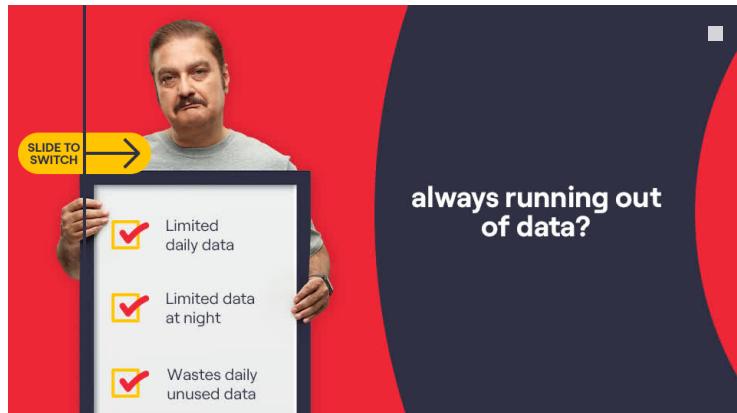


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In Gupta's drama, Ranvir Shorey's Public Prosecutor Savak Jamshedji tries to copy Irani's character with his long experience of getting rigorous imprisonment for the guilty and, not to forget, his irritatingly pompous

mannerisms. But that he cannot match Irani is apparent; Shorey's inability to act out a role that required a lot more steely grit bordering on the vicious is glaring. Those who have watched Jolly LLB would remember Irani's glint in the eye. As for Rohan Vinod Mehra, who essays Defence Lawyer Birbal Choudhary, he is simply no match for Arshad Warsi, who brought in a disarming element of innocence (hailing from a small town), pluck and a will to work for a social cause. In the bargain, he turned into a celebrity of sorts.

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Fresher Choudhary is hired to defend Chartered Accountant Bansi Keswani, who handles a rich builder's (Arif Zakaria as Neeraj Sinha) accounts. But a few years later Keswani is accused of stealing three leaves from his

client's chosen book. This causes him to be sent to jail. The amounts are initially low. Caught by the police, he is released after a few days.

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Keswani (Gul Panag) to hire the young Choudhury. Trying to prove his mettle and save Keswani, he feels that the end is important, not the means. They are unethical and illegal, but the lawyer must help his client and build his own reputation as one who has defeated a seasoned Public Prosecutor like Jamshedji — appearing for Sinha.

While one can guess the outcome right from the start, a twist at the end makes the otherwise dull and monotonous screenplay, penned by Gupta, somewhat elevating. The courtroom scenes appear virtually lifeless. No patch on the legal proceedings in Jolly LLB, which were mischievously witty.

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What makes 420 IPC worse are the largely unimpressive performances. Mehra looks like a chocolate boy, and even acts like one. Shorey, despite his earlier laudable movie credits, disappoints – maybe because he was directed to copy Irani's style! Panag is no better than a mere piece of furniture. But Pathak infuses a compelling aura as a man wronged and avenged. He is quiet and controlled conveying a deep sense of disillusionment and angst.

*(Gautaman Bhaskaran is an author, commentator and movie critic who has been covering major film festivals like Cannes, Venice and Tokyo among several others.)*

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