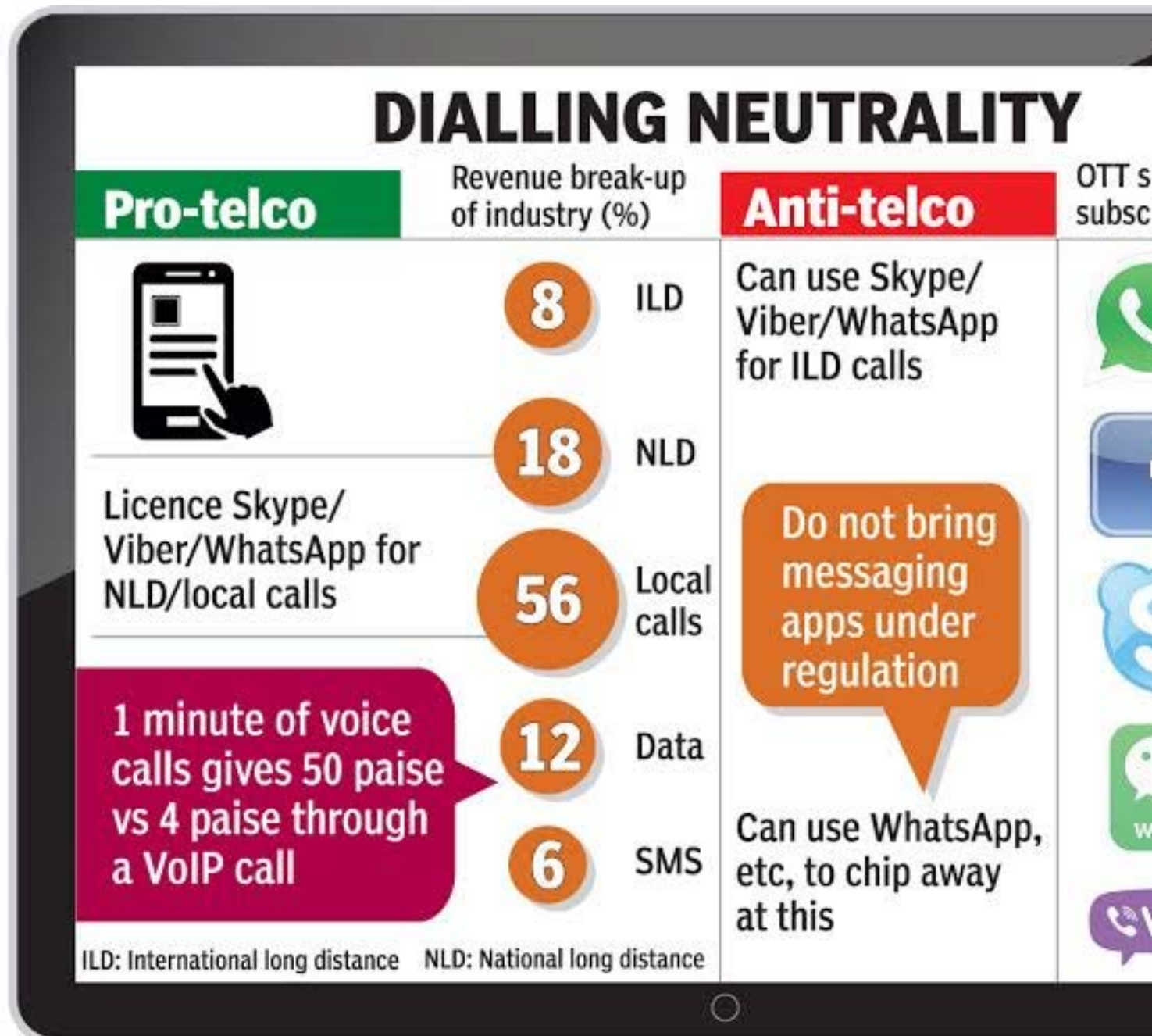


Rishi's story

A department of telecommunications-appointed committee on [net neutrality](#) has recommended that apps of over-the-top (OTT) players like Skype, [WhatsApp](#) and Viber can continue to be used for making international calls or for messaging, but they will have to be licensed when they are used for making either local or national long distance (NLD) calls. What is not clear is how this partial segregation is to be done. The report was submitted to telecom minister Ravi Shankar Prasad last month.

Telcos make about 8% of their revenues from international calls and around 18% and 56% from NLD and local calls, respectively.

If this comes as partial relief to leading telcos that are facing the possibility of OTTs cutting into their lucrative voice revenues — while 1 minute of voice calls gives telcos 40-50 paise of revenue, a 1-minute VoIP call results in just 4 paise revenue — they have been hit when it comes to data packages such as Airtel Zero or Internet.org since the committee has said this violates the principle of net neutrality.



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