The tremors of the Adani crash continue to be felt and real assessment of damage is still to unfold. A statement issued by the People’s Commission on Public sector and Public Services has highlighted the “deeply worrying facets of the regulatory regime governing India’s capital markets.” The outcomes are still peeling off. LIC, India’s biggest insurance agency, has taken a blow. As per reports, the value of LIC Holding in Adani companies have eroded by another Rs 500 crore last Thursday. As per another report, LIC is facing an enormous notional loss of Rs 49,728 crore on its investments in the Adani group stocks. The aftershocks are being felt even in Australia as tens of millions in Australian retirement savings are now at risk because of exposure to Adani. We are yet to see proactive steps from the government as far as accountability is concerned about our savings and investments.
Marred by cost overruns in phase 1, the Union road ministry is already set for the second phase of the ambitious Bharatmala project to build over 5,000 km of expressways and highways at the cost of almost ₹3 trillion. The phase 1 of the project saw near 100% cost overrun from its original estimate of 5.35 trillion. This aside, the project has seen raging protests from the farmers as thousands of acres are being acquired for these corridors. Farmers allege that while the compensation offered is meagre, the nexus of land sharks and revenue officials are minting money in the process. The Bharatmala is part of the government’s emphasis on mega-projects and nodal infrastructure while they neglect expenses on social and arterial infrastructure that generate more decent jobs and also support the poor. And it is us who pay for it from our taxes and the cess on fuel.
PM Modi has made a renewed pitch to attract investments in green energy segments of solar, wind and biogas. Referring to the sectors as a ‘gold mine’ which can unlock mega profits, the PM, addressing a post-budget webinar, exhorted the private sector to make big ticket investments in renewables. As PM and the government seek to ride the green bandwagon to pitch for private investments and profits, it is important to point out that putting the label ‘green’ does not automatically make a sector sustainable or environmentally friendly. For instance, CFA’s work on mega solar plants has shown how it adversely affects biodiversity and livelihoods of the marginalised owing to large scale land usage. Thus, green energy goals need to be pursued after putting adequate environmental and social safeguards in place, both at the level of domestic laws as well as in financial institutions.
Cryptic dissonance: Where we stand on crypto?

The government that has still not recognized crypto currency went ahead in the last budget and levied taxes on crypto. This led to speculations about whether the two were even on the same page on crypto. Later last year the Finance Minister said that the RBI is of the strong view that crypto needs to be banned. The government, she said, wants to explore possibilities of regulating it. Overall, the discourse on the issue shows lack of clarity in the government’s approach on the matter. This week it has been said that the first G-20 meeting of Finance Ministers and Central Bank Governors (FMCBG) will deliberate on crypto-assets, build consensus and discuss steps required to regulate them.