

Nigeria flags off new standard gauge train service

Abuja, Nigeria: Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari on Tuesday flagged off commercial train services on the country's first ever standard gauge rail track linking the capital Abuja with the northern city of Kaduna.



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"The Abuja-Kaduna train service will provide the much needed alternative transport link between the Federal Capital Territory and Kaduna state, a corridor which has a huge potential for industries, agricultural activities, and a growing labour force," Buhari said at the ceremony in Abuja.

The president had a 20-minute ride after the official launch and described it as a "standard gauge railway train service that will be safe, fast and reliable."

He lamented the collapse in rail transport in Nigeria, recalling that between 1963 and early 80s, the nation had a vibrant rail system which conveyed agricultural products, livestock and solid minerals to seaports in Lagos and Port Harcourt in the south for exports. "It is our vision and hope that those good old days will soon be back with us and indeed in a more prosperous way with the restoration of rail transport system which today's occasion symbolises," he said.

Buhari said his government would rehabilitate the existing 3,505 kilometers narrow gauge rail lines and build new standard gauge lines across the country. The 186 km project was built by China Civil Engineering Construction Company at a cost of 1.08 billion dollars.

Source: AFP

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