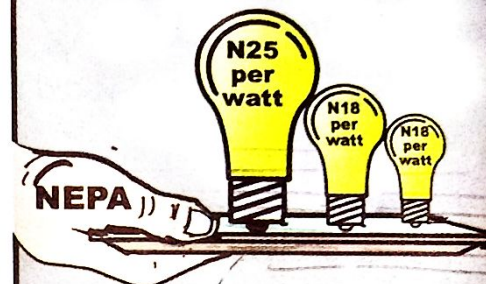


## POCKET CARTOON

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From left, Director Technical Services, National Sugar Development Council, Salihi Beke, Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc, Chief Financial Officer, Debola Falade, Executive Secretary National Sugar Development Council, Zacch Adedeji, Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc, GMD/ CEO, Ravindra Singhvi, General Manager Refinery, Thiru Rajasekar, Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc, During the Executive Secretary's familiarisation visit to Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc, in Lagos, yesterday. Photo: Kehinde Gbadamosi

## Bandits raid varsity, kidnap 23 students, attack army base

By Kingsley Omonobi, Wole Mosadomi & Ibrahim Hassan

**1. ABUJA** — Rampaging bandits yesterday attacked Greenfield University, Kaduna, killed a staff, kidnapped another alongside 23 students, demanding N800 million ransom to free them.

**2.** This is even as bandits got more daring, yesterday at Zazzaga community in Munya Local Government Area of Niger State, attacking a military camp where they set a military vehicles ablaze and made away with a military vehicle.

Two persons, including a soldier and a civilian were also declared missing after

the bandits left the scene.

The attacks came on a day the Chief of Army Staff, Lt. General Ibrahim Attahiru, said Nigeria's security challenges, including banditry, kidnapping, insurgency and secessionist agitations, would be difficult to overcome without required equipment, weapons and armoured fighting vehicles, and funds among others.

### Bandits kill staff of Greenfield University, kidnap 23 students

In the Kaduna attack, the bandits killed a staff of Greenfield University, kidnapped another staff and some students on

Tuesday night.

Greenfield University is located along the Kaduna-Abuja Highway in Chikun Local Government Area. Established three years ago, it is the first private university in the state.

The latest incident is the first major attack that bandits will launch on communities around the Kaduna-Abuja Highway since 300 female soldiers were deployed to the general area last January.

Kaduna State Commissioner for Internal Security and Home Affairs, Samuel Aruwan, confirmed the attack.

Eye-witnesses said the gunmen stormed the university last night and started shooting sporadically, before taking some of the students away.

Locals said that the university with a student population of 40 does not have enough security on ground despite being located in one of the hotbeds of kidnapping, a situation they believe made it an easy target for the bandits.

### N800 million ransom demanded

Although, there was no official confirmation of the number of kidnapped students, a family member of one of the missing students said that the gunmen had demanded N800 million ransom before they will release the no fewer than 23 students and a staff of the institution. "Negotiations are going

on; the kidnappers have contacted some family members, asking for the payment of N800 million," a cousin of one of the kidnapped students, Georgiana Stephen, said.

She said the abductors asked her family to pay N8 million ransom before they could secure the release of their sister from captivity.

According to Georgiana, the abducted 23 students were mainly girls, including six boys.

She said the kidnappers were subjecting the students to torture, saying unless the ransom was paid, all the students in captivity would be killed.

This is the second time students of a higher institution would be kidnapped in Kaduna. The first was at Federal College of Forestry and Mechanization, Afaka, where 39 students were abducted on March 12. So far only 10 of the students have regained freedom. The kidnappers are asking for N500 million ransom, which the Kaduna State Government has refused to pay.

Security operatives who took custody of the remaining students of the university had handed them over to the institution.

Confirming the attack yesterday, the Commissioner for Internal

Security and Home Affairs in Kaduna State, Samuel Aruwan, said in a statement that on Tuesday night, the Ministry received distress calls of an attack by armed bandits on the Greenfield University, situated at Kasarami, off the Kaduna-Abuja Road in Chikun LGA.

According to him, troops of Operation Thunder Strike (OPTS) and other operatives swiftly moved to the location and the armed bandits retreated.

He said: "After search-and-rescue operations, a staff member of the university, Paul Ude Okafor, was confirmed to have been killed by the armed bandits, while a number of students were kidnapped.

"The security operatives took custody of the remaining students who have been handed over to the institution, as at noon today, Wednesday 21st April 2021.

"The actual number of students kidnapped is still being sought from the institution's records," he said.

"Troops and other security operatives are working in the general area, and the public will be informed of further developments."

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