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Better Days Ahead for Mining Sector



*Mines Production Manager, **Calbert Hanson** (left) points to an active mining pit as the Minister of Transport and Mining, the Hon. Robert Montague (centre) tours the facility along with other stakeholders. Also sharing the lens is Lands and Mines and Land Legacy Director, **Timothy O'Driscoll** (right).*

Minister of Transport and Mining, the Honourable Robert Montague, says better days are ahead for the mining sector. The Minister was speaking at a meeting ahead of a tour of the refinery and mining areas recently.

Minister Montague, in addressing the meeting, revealed that during the last quarter, the Jamaican economy grew by 1.8 percent and that 56 percent of that growth was supported by substantial strides in the mining and quarrying sectors.

The Minister further revealed that the government has implemented several initiatives to further strengthen the mining industry.

"We have launched a mining school where the first cohort of quarry operators is being trained; we have the National Mining Policy which is now before the Cabinet awaiting a decision and we have gone ahead with the Quarry Advisory Committee to extend the quarry licence for on-land mining from one year up to 10 years," said Minister Montague.

Minister Montague noted that since taking office in March last year, a record number of 26 exploratory licences for minerals such as gold, silver, copper, cobalt and zinc have been approved and encouraged Jamalco to explore other mining options outside of bauxite. The Minister further reported that a mandate was given to the Commissioner of Mines and Geology to explore mud lakes for finding other opportunities that may exist for their development.

Following the meeting, the Minister and other stakeholders inclusive of Minister of State in the Ministry of National Security and Member of Parliament for South East Clarendon, Rudyard Spencer; Chairman of Clarendon Alumina Production (CAP), Dennis Morgan, other members of the CAP Board, members of the Jamaica Bauxite Institute and the Commissioner of Mines & Geology, Roy Nicholson toured the refinery, RSA and the Mines where they were given a first-hand view of the operations.