

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DATE : 17 DEC 2016

DAY : Saturday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

17 DEC 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR: No to La Mesa watershed housing project, political intervention

By AYICH DELA CRUZ

Environment Secretary Regina Lopez is confident that political connections won't get in the government's way of protecting the La Mesa Watershed with respect to the cancellation of Century Properties Group, Inc.'s (CPI) environmental certificate clearance (ECC) for its planned housing project in the area.

Lopez said she is confident President Duterte will not tolerate corruption amid concerns that CPI owner Jose E.B. Antonio, who has been appointed as the country's special envoy to the United States, might leverage for the reversal of the decision.

"He (Duterte) does what he thinks

is right and I'm not very far from that. I don't see how having a housing subdivision inside the watershed of 12 million people is resonant with the common good," Lopez said in a press conference last Thursday.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) revoked the ECC of CPI for the construction of its housing project since it will affect the quality of drinking water being supplied by water supply concessionaires.

The housing project was supposed to cater to the employees of MWSS, which the Supreme Court (SC) initially allowed but was later on opposed by at least five million people including the water firm itself, Lopez said.

CPI will also have to secure a

tree-cutting permit, which the DENR is constrained not to grant, pursuant to Proclamation 1336 signed by then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo, declaring the La Mesa Watershed Reservation as a protected area.

According to DENR Undersecretary for Legal Affairs Maria Paz Luna, CPI wants to put up 97 buildings with a gross floor area of 1,110,569 square meters and 6,116 parking lots, which is totally not feasible from an environmental perspective.

"There is a management plan of the council that does not include this type of project. We grant tree-cutting permits in public areas and watersheds only for government purposes like transmission lines," Luna said.

Even if the CPI re-applies for

another ECC, Luna said it would no longer make any sense precisely because of such restriction.

"Considering that we cannot grant a tree-cutting permit, I think it will be a waste of their money," she said.



17 DEC 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Laguna de Bay fish pens to be dismantled

Fish pens in Laguna de Bay will be dismantled starting next month, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has announced.

"We will clean Laguna Lake by destroying fish pens, but we will pay attention to the poor fishermen so they can continue to earn money," Environment Secretary Gina Lopez told a news conference on Thursday.

"We are not renewing fish permits that will expire this December," Lopez said.

She bared plans to implement programs to provide income for the affected fishermen, including the conversion of the lake into an eco-tourism zone.

DENR Undersecretary Art Valdez, who heads the National Anti-Environmental Crime Task Force, said they would encourage the fishermen to

dismantle their fish pens after harvesting their produce.

The dismantling of fish pens will allow small-scale fishermen to gain access to traditional fishing grounds, the DENR said.

The lake allows up to only 9,000 hectares for aquaculture, but fish pens and cages are occupying 12,375.18 hectares.

Data from the Laguna Lake Development Authority

(LLDA) show that there are 1,018 legitimate fish pen operators in Laguna de Bay and 2,261 illegal operators.

To maintain open fishing grounds, the LLDA designated fish sanctuaries covering around 30,000 hectares in Muntinlupa City, 5,000 in Jala-Jala and Talim Island in Rizal and Laguna Bay and 127 in Barangay Tabon in Binangonan, Rizal.

- Rhodina Villanueva

17 DEC 2016

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1980

MANILA BULLETIN

THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

DATE

UPPER HA

4
PAGE

LOWER HA

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

• Lopez: It's still a 'no' to nuke power

Environment Secretary Regina Lopez remains adamant on the prospect of developing a nuclear power plant in the country, saying she would rather have the government pour its funds into renewable energy sources, which were proven to be more efficient and cost-effective. "You know, when I was in Marrakech the cost of solar was one dollar and 30 cents, you know, and the cost of solar is going down," Lopez said in a recent interview, citing her observation in Morocco last month when she attended a climate change conference. "In four years, it's going to be cheaper than coal. Geothermal, wind, solar... they say even algae you can get from there," she said (Cruz)

17 DEC 2016

DATE

3

PAGE



UPPER-HALF

LOWER-HALF

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Editorial

Bangis ng air pollution

ANG mga lumang sasakyan na hindi na namiminitina ang numero-unong nagdudulot ng matinding air pollution sa Metro Manila. Ayon sa pag-aaral, 80 porsiyentong emissions ay galing sa mga tambutso ng karag-karag na mga sasakyan. Ang maruming usok mula sa tambutso ang nalalanghap ng commuters araw-araw. Bawat paglabas nila sa kalye particular kung magbibiyahe sila sa EDSA, nakalantad sila sa particles na may lason. Ito ang nagdudulot sa kanila ng mga sakit sa respiratory system.

Ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang may responsibilidad para manatili ang malinis na hangin sa buong bansa. Pero

masakit aminin na hindi gaanong magampanan ng DENR ang kanilang tungkulin para masawata ang mga lumalason sa hangin. Sa kabila na mayroong batas --- ang Clean Air Act, hindi pa rin nasolusyunan ang air pollution at lalo pang lumubha ang problema. Nawalan ng pangil ang DENR at hindi lubusang mai-patupad ang itinatadhana ng Clean Air Act. Naging dekorasyon lang ang batas. Maisisipi sa mga nagdaang administrasyon kung bakit lumala ang problema sa air pollution.

Naniniwala naman kami kay DENR secretary Gina Lopez na masosolusyunan pa niya ang matinding problema sa air pollution. Kung nakaya niyang linisin ang mga nakatambak na basura sa maraming estero sa Metro Manila, maaari rin niyang linisin ang hangin sa lungsod. Ilang paraan para masolusyunan ang air pollution ay ang pagbabawal sa mga lumang sasakyan na 15 taon pataas. Huwag nang hayaang bumiyahe ang mga ito. Ikalawang paraan ay ang seryosong kampanya laban sa smoke belching. Hindi dapat ningas-kugon ang kampanya. Sibakin din ang mga corrupt na namamahala sa anti-smoke belching.

17 DEC 2016



DATE

UPPER HALF

BC

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

DENR cancels ECCs of 6 mining firms

By RHODINA VILLANUEVA

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has cancelled the environmental compliance certificates of six companies that included four mining firms, one housing developer and one resort developer after they reportedly failed to meet the conditions indicated in their respective ECCs.

DENR Secretary Gina Lopez has cancelled the ECC of Austral-Asia (Mining Corp.) after putting Mt. Hamiguitan (a UNESCO World Heritage site), the Philippine Eagle and trees in the area, at risk. The mining firm operates in Sitio Salingcomot, Bgy. Macambol in Mati City.

Lopez said the mining firm is "sandwiched" between two protected areas, referring to Mount Hamiguitan and Pujada Bay. "Because they don't have a place to put their stockpile, species in the area are affected. It was also not indicated in the company's environmental impact assessment how they intend to treat their stockpile," she said.

ECCs of three other mining companies such as the Ipilan Nickel Project, Lupon Mining, and Nickel Deposit Mining were also cancelled because their ECCs lapsed.

The ECC of Century Communities Corp., a property developer in Quezon City was also cancelled for not complying with the requirements of a groundwater survey. The housing project reportedly affected the La Mesa Eco-Watershed, a protected area. Century reportedly failed to submit an enhanced revised monitoring plan,

ground modeling studies to assess water availability and ground water contamination.

Sacobia Sun Valley Resort in Mabalacat, Pampanga and MRL-Egerton Gold Philippines also had their permits cancelled.

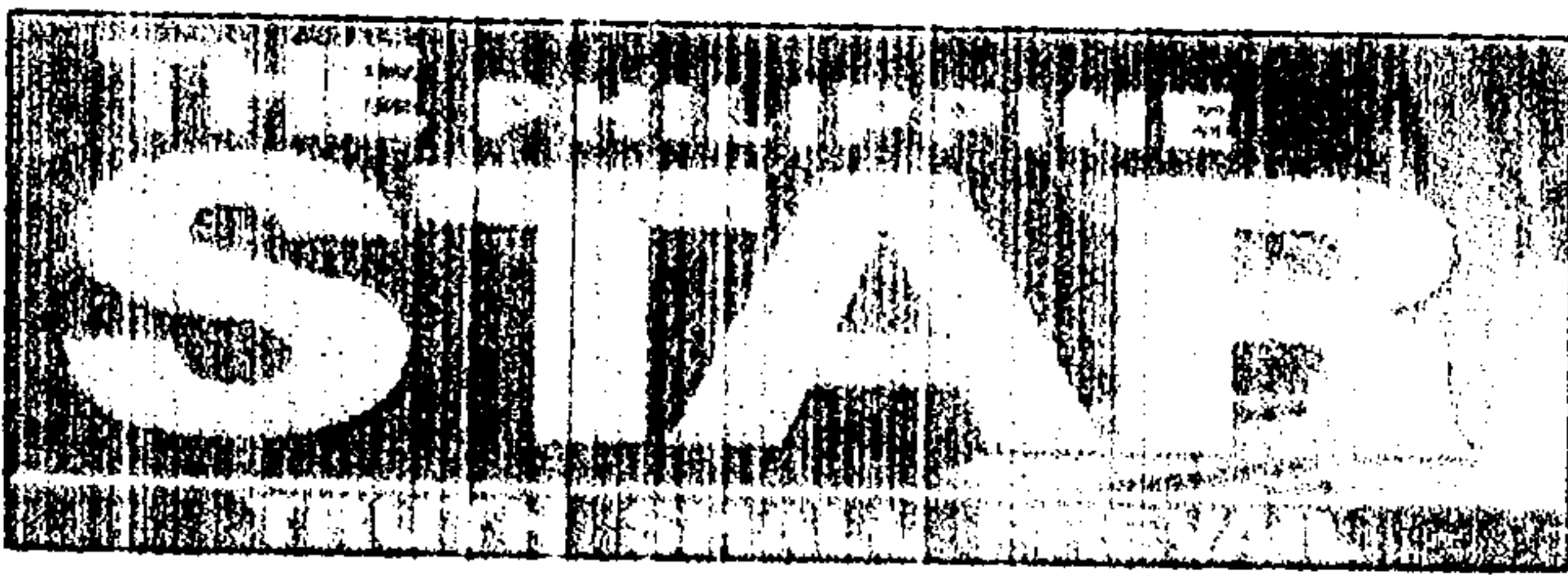
MRL-Egerton Gold Philippines is engaged in gold mining in Lobo, Batangas, one of the coastal towns straddling the Verde Island Passage. The area encompasses 29,000 hectares of the Lobo town.

Environmentalists said the wastes generated by the mine found their way to Lobo rivers, effectively draining into the VIP.

DENR Undersecretary for Legal Affairs Ipat Luna said Egerton failed to come up with an environmental impact assessment, one of the requirements under the ECC.

Show-cause orders were likewise issued to 11 mining companies which include SMTC Chromite Mining and Trading project, consolidation of quarry projects of Mindanao Portland Cement Corp., an iron ore pelletizing plant project, a proposed limestone, pozzolan and associate minerals quarry project, a cement plant and power plant project, Bulalacao Coal Mining project, Iron Ore Mining Corp., a smelting plant project, Welles Area II Mining project, Barobo Alluvial Gold Mining project and a veneer manufacturing expansion project.

The companies were given seven days to explain why their ECCs should not be cancelled and why no administrative fine should be imposed on them.



17 DEC 2016

DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Pichay faces raps for nickel mining

Leaders of indigenous tribes filed a graft complaint yesterday against Surigao del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay over alleged illegal nickel mining operations in their ancestral lands.

Former Mines and Geosciences Bureau director Leo Jasareno, assistant director Danilo Uykieng, MGB-Caraga director Alilio Ensomo, mining engineer Ador Patino and finance and administrative division chief Jose Salve Cabiling were named respondents in

the case filed before the Office of the Ombudsman by chieftains James Biol of the Manobo tribe and Renante Buklas of Mamanwa.

Private individuals Teofranco Mallari, Lolita Bolayog, Allan Plaza and Fe Ligtas, one of the original owners of Claver Mineral Development Corp. (CMD C), were also included in the charge sheet.

The respondents allegedly forcibly entered and took over their 433-hectare land in Barangay Cagdianao in Claver town on Feb. 11.

Members of the Manobo and Mamanwa tribes

By **ELIZABETH MARCELO** were "dragged" from their ancestral domain by the group of Pichay, according to the 16-page complaint.

"We have a police blotter, videos and photos of that event," it read.

Biol and Buklas said they were evicted from their land to give way to the nickel mining operation of CMD C.

The complainants said the respondents violated the law when they took over the land without their consent.

"Under Section 16 of the Indigenous People's Rights Act, no ancestral land shall be

opened for mining operations without the consent of the indigenous cultural community concerned," the complaint stated.

The complainants said Pichay used fraudulent documents to assume control of CMD C, by making it appear that he bought a majority of the shares of the company from Ligtas. However, they said records from the Court of Appeals show that Ligtas divested her shares in 2000.

Shiploads of nickel ore

Biol and Buklas said Pichay

also used his influence over MGB officials to export at least three shiploads of nickel ore to China amounting to \$1.8 million or roughly P86 million even though DENR suspended CMD C's operations since 2012.

Environment Secretary Gina Lopez ordered the closure of the firm again this year, but the respondents continue with their mining operations, the complaint added.

Biol said Lopez should also be held liable for failing to stop the operations of CMD C.

IN BRIEF

Pichay faces graft, grave misconduct complaint

SURIGAO del Sur Rep. Prospero Pichay Jr. is facing a graft and grave misconduct complaint before the Office of the Ombudsman for conspiracy to illegally mine, transport and sell nickel ores from ancestral domains.

Datu James Biol and Datu Renante Baklas of the Manobo and Mamanwa tribes, respectively, also included in the complaint Pichay's mining partner Cesar Detera, former Mines and Geosciences Bureau director Leo Jasareno, MGB assistant director Leo Uykieng, MGB Caraga regional director Alilio Ensomo, Ador Patino of MGB Surigao City, Fe Ligas, Teofranco Mallari, Lolita Bolayog, Allan Plaza and Jose Salve Cabiling.

The charges arose when Pichay and the other accused were alleged to have gained control of the Claver Mineral Development Corp. in the ancestral lands in Barangay Cagdianao in Claver. The mining firm allegedly evicted the indigenous peoples of the Mamanwa tribe, who were reportedly "physically dragged out" from their ancestral lands after a lower court ruled in favor of company in a case filed against the mining operations in Barangay Cagdianao.

Rio Araja

17 DEC 2016



DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Man nabbed for 'hot' logs

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) will file charges against a resident of Daram, Samar for building a boat using illegally cut logs worth P3.5 million.

Dionisio Pacarapara of Barangay Bagacay faces charges

for violation of the Revised Forestry Code.

The PCG in Eastern Samar said Pacarapara failed to present documents for the wood that he used.

Representatives of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources confiscated Pacarapara's six-foot boat, 177 pieces of logs and the boat's fuel.

The PCG said the confiscated items were turned over to the barangay of Daram, Bagacay for safekeeping.

- Michael Punongbayan

17 DEC 2016



DATE

UPPER HALF

PAGE

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

CA bypasses appointments of 9 Cabinet members

By JESS DIAZ

The appointments of nine Cabinet members bypassed by the Commission on Appointments lapse today, Isabela Rep. Rodolfo Albano III, who is CA majority leader, said yesterday.

He said President Duterte could either issue them new ad interim appointments or replace them.

Under the Constitution and CA rules, he said the President could appoint Cabinet members or reappoint bypassed officials while Congress is on recess.

Such appointments are immediately effective and remain so until the next adjournment of Congress, he added.

"Thus, the appointments of the nine bypassed Cabinet officials lapse today, the official start of the Christmas adjournment of the House of Representatives and the Senate," he stressed.

Albano pointed out that if the nine Cabinet officials were not issued new ad interim appointments today, there would be a gap in their status that their critics or enemies could use to question their stay in office and their actions and decisions.

He explained that the President is also authorized to issue regular appointments

while Congress is in session, "but the appointees cannot immediately assume office, since their appointments take effect only after confirmed by the CA."

Such appointments remain effective until the President replaces the appointees, he said.

The nine Cabinet members bypassed by the CA were Emmanuel Piñol of agriculture, Rafael Mariano of agrarian reform, Leonor Briones of education, Regina Lopez of environment and natural resources, Paulyn Jean Ubial of health, Vitaliano Aguirre II of justice, Judy Taguiwalo of social welfare and development, Ramon Lopez of trade and industry, and Perfecto Yasay Jr. of foreign affairs.

Of the nine, Piñol's and Ubial's appointments have already been subjected to hearings but their confirmation was deferred due to opposition from lawmakers.

It was Occidental Mindoro Rep. Josephine Sato who called for postponing the CA decision on Piñol.

She asked the agriculture secretary to present in future hearings concrete plans that would cushion the impact of the removal of volume and tariff restrictions on rice imports beginning in June 2017.

17 DEC 2016



DATE

3

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICE NEWS CLIPPINGS

Bautista orders planning, dev't dept to resolve boundary disputes amicably

By CORY MARTINEZ

QUEZON City Mayor Herbert Bautista has ordered the city's planning and development department to study how the city government will be able to facilitate a peaceful and amicable settlement on city's boundary disputes.

Bautista issued the order as he stressed the need to resolve the boundary disputes, not only among barangays but also with other local government units, so that the city government can fully utilize them.

The mayor said that discrepancies in boundaries shared by Quezon City with the cities of Marikina, Valenzuela, Manila and Caloocan are among the priority areas that need to be cleared.

A review by the CPDO of the political boundary map of Quezon City prepared by contractors of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) for its Cadastral Survey Project indicated discrepancies in the city's boundary line with Marikina, Valenzuela and Manila.

With Marikina, discrepancies are noted in the vicinity of Ayala Heights and Capitol Park Homes from the

Arroyo Creek towards Loyola Grand Villas in Bgy. Matandang Balara and in the vicinity of La Vista Subdivision towards Ateneo Campus in Bgys. Pan-sol and Loyola Heights.

Between QC and Valenzuela, the discrepancy was noted particularly at Bgys. San Bartolome and Bagbag along Tullahan River while in the boundary with Manila, the discrepancy was noted at the corner of A. Bonifacio Avenue and North Cemetery.

With Caloocan City, the mayor wants the city's boundary line at Bgy. Baesa resolved.

Quezon City's boundary map was based on the coordinates of the City Boundary Monuments (CBM) obtained from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Land Management Bureau (DENR-LMB) and with reference to the 1956 Amended Revised Charter of Quezon City.

Bautista has also ordered the speedy settlement of boundary disputes between some of the city's barangays.

At present, there are about 28 QC, barangays having territorial disputes; among them are Bgys. Commonwealth and Payatas, Libis and Bagumbayan, Sto. Cristo and Ramon Magsaysay, Kaunlaran and San Martin de Porres.



17 DEC 2016

DATE

12

PAGE

UPPER HALF

LOWER HALF

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

QC seeks end of boundary disputes in 4 cities

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Cory Martinez