

Beijing Completes Air Quality Monitoring System

The Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Beijing authorities have completed a network of monitors that will more accurately measure air quality in the pollution-ridden city after being pushed into it by public pressure and reports from the U.S. embassy.

The Beijing Municipal Environmental Monitoring Center said Saturday that another 15 monitoring stations had begun releasing real-time data on small particulates known as PM2.5. The tiny pollution particles can penetrate deep into the lungs, so measuring them is considered a more accurate reflection of air quality than other methods.

Pressure has built on the government to report that data since the U.S. Embassy started publishing PM2.5 readings taken from its rooftop on Twitter. Chinese citizens have prodded their government into publishing more detailed pollution data.

Beijing started releasing PM2.5 data in January. It now has 35 monitoring stations set up in central Beijing and its suburbs, including near tourist favorites Tiananmen Square, the Temple of Heaven and the Beijing Botanical Garden.

The monitors will run for a three-month trial, and then the city's environmental protection department will formally use PM2.5 to evaluate the city's air quality, rather than relying on the larger particles it currently measures.

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