

China increases environmental inspections

A new round of central environmental inspections primarily aimed at improving air quality, began in cities around Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Friday.

The on-site inspections until March 29, 2018, will root out problems with emissions and pollution control equipment, according to a press briefing by the Ministry of Environmental Protection (MEP) on Friday.

“Local officials will be held accountable if cities fail to meet environmental protection targets”, said Liu Changgen, a senior MEP official.

The MEP released a plan last week for 28 northern cities to lower a major air pollution this coming winter. Between October and March 2018, the level of PM 2.5 pollution must be reduced by at least 15 percent in cities around the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region.

The ministry will increase air quality monitoring and deal with unauthorized operations or those which fail to meet emission standards, while controlling coal consumption in the region.

A coordination body will be set up to oversee inspections in the region before the end of September.

Density of PM2.5 nationwide dropped 6.9 percent year on year in July, while Beijing reported an average PM2.5 density of 64 micrograms per cubic meter in the first seven months of 2017, down 34.7 percent from the same period in 2013.