No. 038/2025 dated 24 March 2025

# AI-Powered Anti-Corruption Drive:
# The Chinese Party-State's Fight against Graft

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## SYNOPSIS

*An AI-driven anti-corruption drive in China, led by tools like DeepSeek, is reshaping governance by enhancing efficiency in China's march to rid out corruption while raising ethical concerns. It has transformed China's governance system into one that blends advanced technology with political norms defined by the party constitution.*

## COMMENTARY

In March 2025, the Suihua Municipal Commission for Discipline Inspection and Supervision in Heilongjiang Province made a startling discovery. Using the DeepSeek large language model (LLM) to analyse old-age subsidy data, investigators uncovered a network of fraudulent claims linked to "zombie accounts" — three deceased individuals who were still receiving government subsidies. Behind these falsified claims lay a web of corruption, exposing collusion within and well beyond the public service.

This real-life case marks the beginning of a new era of AI-driven anti-corruption efforts in China. As traditional oversight methods struggle to counter increasingly sophisticated corruption, authorities are turning to domestic LLMs to revolutionise the anti-corruption battlefield. AI-powered supervision is no longer just a technological advancement — it is becoming a critical weapon in China's ongoing fight against graft.

### AI and the Future of Anti-Corruption in China

China is facing new governance challenges as traditional oversight struggles to keep pace with sophisticated misconduct. Key emerging forms of corruption include laundering funds through virtual currencies, using complex equity nesting to hide illicit

activities, and combining official duties with illicit activities. But AI-powered tools like DeepSeek now demonstrate the ability to uncover these schemes much faster than manual investigations, as seen in a case where DeepSeek identified in just 72 hours a bribe network routed through 20 shell companies. Manual work to uncover such corruption would have taken three months.

Traditional oversight agencies face issues such as information overload, cognitive blind spots, and slow response times. The advent of AI solutions such as DeepSeek aids in addressing these challenges, with advanced tools like relationship mapping, multimodal cognitive analysis, and dynamic risk modelling — all of which are reshaping governance and supervision in China in areas like social welfare, political oversight, and investigations.

AI-powered anti-corruption efforts in China have revolutionised the way the government combats misconduct. Faster, more efficient detection of corruption will potentially reduce investigation time from months to days. AI also enhances oversight in areas like social welfare, political supervision, and evidence gathering.

This transformation represents a shift in governance in China. Blending AI with political and legal norms enables the Chinese government to create a more efficient yet complex system of anti-corruption efforts. However, while AI empowers enforcement, the balance between technological advancements and political accountability remains a critical issue, given the authoritarian norms underpinning China's governance model.

**Domestic Implications of Corruption**

Since 2012, President Xi Jinping's anti-corruption campaign has led to the investigation and discipline of millions of individuals, including high-ranking figures. In addition, Beijing's international operations like Fox Hunt, part of its Skynet anti-corruption campaign, have led to the arrest and extradition of thousands of fugitives and billions in illicit funds recovered. The National Supervisory Commission, established in 2018, has strengthened oversight over party members and public servants alike. China's top prosecutors have ramped up efforts to combat corruption at the grassroots level, particularly in healthcare, education, and employment, as these areas directly impact people's daily livelihoods.

Despite these measures, corruption remains deeply entrenched. Many analysts argue that systemic reforms, beyond high-profile crackdowns, are essential for long-term progress. China ranked 76th out of 180 in Transparency International's 2024 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), with a score of 43. Corruption is particularly prevalent in real estate, construction, and tax collection. It remains a pressing concern as it impacts people's livelihoods. Public perception of the efficacy of government anti-corruption efforts is particularly important for the regime's legitimacy.

**Central Government Agencies, State-Owned Enterprises, and the Defence Sector under Gunfire**

According to the South China Morning Post, China's anti-corruption campaign has intensified since 2024, with 56 high-ranking officials placed under investigation — a 25 per cent increase from last year. Overall, the Central Commission for Discipline

Inspection has widened its scope, focusing on central agencies, state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and the military as it seeks to root out corruption at the highest levels of government.

SOEs have seen a sharp rise in corruption cases, with six executives investigated in 2024. The aviation and defence industries have been particularly affected, with dozens of top executives under investigation, including Tan Ruisong, former chairman of the [Aviation Industry Corporation of China](#). The crackdown has extended to non-financial SOEs as authorities seek to tighten control over strategic industries.

The People's Liberation Army (PLA) is also under growing scrutiny, with a major focus on the PLA Rocket Force, which oversees China's nuclear arsenal. [China's annual government work report](#)published in March discussed the military's entrenched corruption challenges, calling for a "deepening of political rectification" within the defence sector. The political demise of several top officials — including former defence ministers Li Shangfu and Wei Fenghe — and the suspension of Central Military Commission member Miao Hua underscore how important the fight against corruption is to Xi Jinping's reassertion of political control as it is about discipline. China's military modernisation efforts go [hand in hand](#) with the country's march to root out internal decay, increase transparency, and restore confidence in the military.

The increase in corruption cases within top Communist Party organs and ministries over the past two years underpins Xi Jinping's directive to eliminate graft in sectors with high concentrations of power and resources. Former justice minister [Tang Yijun](#), agriculture minister [Tang Renjian](#), and national sports chief [Gou Zhongwen](#) are some prominent figures who have faced political disloyalty charges in addition to corruption allegations.

The campaign has also reached rising political stars at the provincial level, signalling that corruption enforcement is not limited to senior officials. Among those expelled for corruption are [Gao Peng](#), deputy mayor of Beijing; [Yang Fasen](#), Qinghai Province security chief; [Wang Yilin](#), former Communist Party chief and chairman of China National Petroleum Corp; [Wang Yong](#), deputy head of Tibet; and [Wu Yingjie](#), former party chief of Tibet and deputy head of the National People's Congress' Education, Science, Culture and Public Health Committee.



China's use of AI in anti-corruption efforts boosts efficiency but raises concerns about transparency, ethical oversight, and data privacy. *Image source: Unsplash.*

**Conclusion**

China's anti-corruption drive is evolving, with authorities casting a wider net while tightening enforcement. The focus has expanded beyond traditional targets, reaching into the central government, military, and key industries. With no clear end in sight, a protracted anti-corruption crackdown powered by AI will continue indefinitely under the Xi administration, reshaping China's political and economic landscape.

China's integration of AI into governance, especially in anti-corruption efforts, raises renewed questions about transparency, ethical oversight, and data privacy. The balance between state control and AI transparency is a significant challenge, as is ensuring that algorithms remain free from bias. The reliance on AI for decision-making prompts concerns about over-reliance on technology and the role of human judgement. Additionally, protecting citizens' privacy while utilising vast quantities of data is a critical issue. In China's quest to root out corruption, the alignment of AI with political norms defined by the party constitution could centralise power while greatly streamlining the anti-corruption campaign. On the other hand, it could raise concerns about long-term implications for democratic accountability and personal freedoms.

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