

DAP man apologises again for saying reporters can be bought
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 17 — DAP election publicity chief Hew Kuan Yau today apologised for the second time for claiming reporters engaged in “compensated dating” with politicians from the ruling coalition and acted like hired guns.

Compensated dating, or enjo kosai, is a practice originating in Japan where men give younger women money or gifts for their companionship and also sometimes sexual favours, according to Wikipedia.

“I would like to publicly tender my sincere apologies for the ‘analogy’ that I drew, which offended many upright and honest media practitioners,” Hew said in a statement.

“I never intended to cause embarrassment to the many honest and upright media practitioners in Malaysia. I deeply regret that as the controversy evolved, many friends from the media felt hurt by some distorted interpretations that were spun by my enemy.”

Media freedom is the cornerstone of political democratisation, stressed Hew, who also thanked reporters who have “struggled long and hard under our harsh political climate” for their work.

He hoped Malaysia’s media will be given more freedom in future so it could play a greatly expanded role in keeping the authorities in check.

He said he was prepared to work with the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) to fight for greater press freedom in Malaysia.

In a February 6 Facebook post, Hew said that “non-self-respecting” reporters had allegedly been paid by BN politicians to write biased stories and likened the act to compensated dating.

“As a matter of fact, I know many local correspondents are ‘enjoying benefits from both sides’. They are willing to act as ‘hired pens’ on behalf of the local Barisan Nasional leaders. They report Pakatan Rakyat’s news with great bias!

“Freedom of the press is an important battlefield for democratic movement. Hence I urge those who were involved in ‘compensated dating’ with Barisan Nasional to redeem yourself,” he had said in the Chinese-language post.

Hew later issued his first apology on Facebook after coming under fire from the NUJ and other press associations: “I apologise for causing controversy by telling the truth.”

DAP disciplinary committee chairman Tan Kok Wai has said no action will be taken against Hew as the latter was merely stating a fact.

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