

**MCA opts for silence on shuttlecock campaign**  
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Did the Youth and Sports Ministry abuse its power by using All-England badminton champions Koo Kien Keat and Tan Boon Heong as campaign tools in the run up to the by-election in Machap?

This was the question which the opposition party DAP wanted to find out in Parliament today but their queries were smashed down by Deputy Youth and Sports Minister Liow Tiong Lai.

Liow, who is also the MCA Youth chief, refused to explain why the badminton duo were brought to Machap.

Earlier M Kulasegaran (DAP-Ipoh Barat) wanted to know if Koo and Tan had volunteered to be in Machap or they were brought there against their wishes.

Kulasegaran said that the players' coach Rexy Mainaky had said that they were not very comfortable taking part in the programme in Machap because their main consideration was sports and not politics.

Liow refused to reply the question, stating that it was irrelevant.

Liow had invited Koo and Tan, who became firm favourites among local sports fans after their exploits in the All-England and the Swiss Open, to take part in the 'Love Badminton Campaign' campaign in Machap last Saturday.

This was seen by the DAP as political ploy by MCA to campaign for their candidate Lai Meng Chong, 56 for the Machap state seat by-election tomorrow.

Lai will be facing DAP's Liou Chen Kuang, 33 for the seat which fell vacant following the death of its assemblyperson Poh Ah Tiam on March 15.

Speaking to reporters later at the Parliament lobby, Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang said the deputy minister should have explained himself on the accusations of exploiting national sportsmen for his party's use.

"He had a chance to explain himself but he refused to, that proves him guilty," said Lim.

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