

Watch out! Dr M timepieces a hoax

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Dozens duped into ordering luxury items supposedly featuring PM's signature

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PETALING JAYA: Dozens of people ordered luxury watches engraved with the signature of Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and parted with their money, not realising that there was no such product.

However, the plan to relieve people of tens of thousands of ringgit was ordered to be halted immediately after Dr Mahathir himself was alerted, said the Prime Minister's Office.

"As soon as we got to know of it, it was stopped immediately," said an aide to the prime minister.

The aide also said Dr Mahathir had never endorsed such watches with his signature to be sold to civil servants.

More than a fortnight ago, *The Star* chanced upon a brochure with an order form for a watch engraved with Dr Mahathir's signature.

The brochure was circulated among civil servants in selected departments in Putrajaya.

After checking with all parties involved, it was found that no such watch existed and that the brochure was false advertising.

When *The Star* checked with the organiser, purportedly a sports club for civil servants, we were told that they had stopped taking orders for the watch.

"We have stopped it because of technical reasons. We now have to return the money to those who made the orders.

"We have many who ordered but do not worry, we will have another watch on offer in the near future," said the person whose name was listed on the brochure as

Too good to be true: The brochure advertising luxury watches supposedly signed by Dr Mahathir.

the contact person.

The number was the same as the Prime Minister's Office.

Checks with civil servants showed that they, too, were told that Dr Mahathir was informed of this and that it was stopped immediately because he did not want his name to be used to make commercial profits.

"The PM was very angry," said a source.

Maurice Lacroix Malaysia, when contacted, said a luxury watch gallery had made informal inquiries using the same brochure a few weeks ago.

"The person who inquired said it should be kept private and confidential.

"I was asked, 'How much would

an engraved watch like this cost?' I said I would have to check with the factory.

"The person did not provide any formal inquiry or internal purchase order as it was merely a verbal inquiry.

"Our head office told me that it would cost about RM3,000 to RM4,000 for an engraved piece – half the price stated on the brochure," said the spokesperson from Maurice Lacroix Malaysia, who did not want to be named.

According to the brochure, the watches come in three styles: MM 2020, MM 2019-I and MM 2019-II.

MM 2020 is allegedly from the Maurice Lacroix range and comes in black and brown of editions of 50 each.

Hefty prices: The three watch styles offered, with prices ranging from RM1,200 to RM7,000.

This costs RM7,000 each.

According to the Maurice Lacroix spokesperson, the design advertised on the brochure is one of their watches from the "mass luxury" range, which can go for up to RM8,000.

"There are other ranges which can go for up to tens of thousands of ringgit," said the spokesperson.

The other two watches advertised in the brochure are of a "cheaper" version and come in editions of 100 each.

Meanwhile, MM 2019-I and MM 2019-II cost RM1,800 and RM1,200 respectively.

If indeed such a watch existed, it would be the first of its kind in the history of Malaysia's prime ministers.

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Maurice Lacroix Malaysia
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