

Crush breaks out at Indonesian BlackBerry event

November 25 2011

An offer of discounted BlackBerry smart phones turned into a frenzy Friday when thousands of Indonesians stormed the outlet, causing a crush in which at least three people were injured and some fainted.

Around 300 police and paramilitary officers were deployed outside the Pacific Place mall in central Jakarta after the promotion turned into mayhem, in a country that is BlackBerry's biggest market outside North America.

BlackBerry makers [Research in Motion](#) (RIM) had announced a week earlier that their new BlackBerry Bold 9790 would be launched Friday at half price for the first 1,000 people.

But 5,000 BlackBerry fans gathered in the heat outside the mall for a chance to grab the latest model at the cut-rate price of 2.3 million rupiah (\$260).

Some had been queuing since a day earlier, police said.

"It turned chaotic around midday as thousands of people started pushing each other to get closer to the mall," Jakarta police spokesman Baharudin Djafar told AFP.

"There was more harm being done than good, so we immediately asked the organisers to stop the event," he said.

Sherly, 32, who had been waiting since early Friday morning, was one of several who fainted as she got caught in the crush.

"The mass just went crazy and began pushing each other. It was really scary, I was squeezed by the crowd until I lost consciousness," the Jakarta Globe news website quoted her as saying.

A [hospital staff](#) member told AFP that three people were being treated for injuries, including broken bones.

Police said some people had been paid around \$50 to queue up for others.

BlackBerrys are hugely popular among Indonesians, and annual imports of the [smart phones](#) are expected to reach four million [handsets](#) by the year end, according to RIM.

The company said it decided to close the event for safety reasons.

"Throughout the promotion at Pacific Place, [RIM](#) worked with the [security personnel](#) to prioritise the safety of our customers who amassed at the consumer launch," it said in a statement.

"With the larger attendance of [BlackBerry](#) fans at Pacific Place, it was decided to close the event to avoid discomfort and ensure the safety of those in the crowd," it added.

Police said they would question the organisers.

"The organisers should have given us some input about how many people they expected to come so that we could have enough officers to maintain security," Djafar said.

"We will question the organisers," he said.

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