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Bank Negara briefs foreign fund managers regularly

BANK Negara regularly holds meetings with foreign fund managers to brief them on Malaysia's policies and outlook, said Deputy Governor Datuk Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz.

"It is our usual practice to meet them. It is important that they know what our policies are," she said after opening an arts bazaar organised by Bank Negara and the associations of financial institutions in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

In conjunction with the art bazaar, an art competition aimed at supporting the theme "Art of Savings" was also held.

Yesterday, some 13 fund managers from Singapore and Hong Kong attended a special closed-door briefing by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad organised by financial adviser to the Government, Salomon Smith Barney.

Asked whether the central bank planned to reduce the statutory reserve requirement further, Zeti said: "Bank Negara never discusses future implementation of measures or policies."

She also declined to comment on a report that Blue Circle Industries Plc had proposed to pay for its foreign equity investment by swapping US dollars for ringgit.

Asked whether Bank Negara would allow companies to swap foreign currencies for ringgit to pay for their investments, Zeti said the central bank would comment at the appropriate time.

Blue Circle has proposed to buy a 65 per cent stake in Kedah Cement Bhd for RM701.4 million.

Earlier, in her speech, Zeti said savings campaigns were not intended to stop people from spending but meant to inculcate in them the culture of planning their budget and spending wisely.

Such campaigns also encouraged savings not just through cash deposits but also through the cutting down of unnecessary spending, she said.

Zeti said saving campaigns could also increase awareness on the need for efficient use of resources.

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