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Amanah Raya may manage EPF funds of the deceased

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The Government is studying amendments to the laws to allow Amanah Raya Bhd to manage the savings of a deceased Employees Provident Fund member who did not name his beneficiaries.

The move would also allow the next of kin to claim the money faster than the current period of between one and three years.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said with the amendment, the time taken for courts to issue Letters of Administration, which give the next of kin access to the money, would also be shortened.

These measures are part of the Government's aim to serve the public with speed and efficiency as mandated by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Rais said.

"We are looking at amending Section 51 of the EPF Act so that operationally, an individual's funds can be managed by Amanah Raya," he said after attending a briefing by Amanah Raya officials.

Rais said a study to amend Section 51 of the EPF Act has been amended and the Government was now trying to "harmonise" the proposal with Amanah Raya's functions.

(Rais' portfolio in the Prime Minister's Department includes overseeing the functions of Amanah Raya, which was the Department of Public Trustee and Official Administrator before its corporatisation in 1995.)

Section 51 states that an EPF member's funds cannot be assigned, transferred, attached, sequestered or taxed for any debt or claim.

On the issuance of Letters of Administration by the courts, Rais said he would discuss shortening the time with the Chief Justice and Chief Registrar.

He said it currently took between one and three years for the court to issue the letter to the next of kin, and this was an unfair burden.

Another proposal is a tax exemption for a portion of dividends given by Amanah Raya to its trust account holders.

"This is an impetus for the public to have their assets administered by Amanah Raya," Rais said.

Rais also introduced Amanah Raya's new chairman Datuk Dusuki Ahmad who took over on Dec 29.

Dusuki was political secretary to former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Parliamentary Secretary to the Information Ministry.

Earlier, Rais also presented a laptop donated by Amanah Raya to Radzali Ahmad, 40, a blind student at Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris, Tanjung Malim.

Radzali has been blind since 17.