

Filipina on Indonesia death row says planned transfer a 'miracle' - The Star

YOGYAKARTA: A Filipina drug convict on death row in Indonesia told AFP from prison on Friday (Dec 13) that her planned transfer was a "miracle", in her first interview since Manila and Jakarta signed an agreement last week to repatriate her.

Mother of two Mary Jane Veloso, 39, was arrested and sentenced to death in 2010 after the suitcase she was carrying was found to be lined with 2.6 kilograms (5.7 pounds) of heroin, in a case that sparked an uproar in the Philippines.

"This is a miracle because, honestly, even now, it still feels like a dream. Every morning when I wake up, I think about my aspirations, aspirations that I never had any certainty about," she told AFP at a woman's prison on Java island, when asked about the decision.

"That's why I always prayed to God, 'Lord, I only ask for one chance to go home and be with my family'. And God answered that prayer."

She has previously claimed she was duped by an international drug syndicate.

In 2015, she narrowly escaped execution after her suspected recruiter was arrested and the Philippine government won a last-minute reprieve for her.

Last week, Indonesia's senior law and human rights minister Yusril Ihza Mahendra said a "practical arrangement" had been signed for her repatriation.

He said her release could take place "around Dec 20" and that he had heard her death penalty would be reduced to life imprisonment. - AFP

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