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## THE SOUTH

### NRC confirms nurses face headscarf, veil ban

Pattani \_ Petdao Tohmeena, a member of the National Reconciliation Commission (NRC), has confirmed that a medical school and five nursing schools in the South have banned female Muslim students from wearing the Islamic headscarf, or nijab, and veil during clinical procedures.

Dr Petdao was countering a denial by Deputy Education Minister Rung Kaewdaeng that such a ban existed.

She said the NRC and the Senate public health panel had received complaints from 43 students about the ban by Prince of Songkhla University Hat Yai campus' faculties of medicine and nursing and the Princess Mother nursing colleges in Yala, Narathiwat, Songkhla and Trang.

In their complaints, the students said the institutions cited the reason for the ban being the possibility of the nijab and veil touching patients and potentially spreading disease, Dr Petdao said.

Some nursing students of Prince of Songkhla University facing the ban have resigned as a result and gone to study elsewhere, she said.

She said certain overseas research studies had found only a very slim chance of long-sleeved Islamic dresses known as abayas and nijabs spreading disease.

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