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Why fingernails down a blackboard sound so irritating

Washington, Nov 6 : The shape of the human ear may be responsible for amplifying the most obnoxious elements of the noises, a new study has suggested.

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The human ear is known to be particularly sensitive to pitches in the mid- to low-level range of frequencies, between 2000 hertz and 4000 hertz, which is the peak of human hearing.

Researchers from the University of Vienna in Austria removed information from actual audio clips of people scraping their nails or bits of chalk against a chalkboard and then played these modified clips to willing participants.

Half the study subjects were told what the sounds were while the other half thought that they were listening to selections from contemporary music.

They then the participants to rate each sound's unpleasantness, and also gauged the subjects' stress responses to the noises by measuring their blood pressure, heart rate, and skin conductivity.

The researchers found that when they removed all the pitch information in this range from the audio recordings, the study participants rated the noises as more pleasant than other versions of the sounds.

"We supposed that frequencies in the low-mid range of human hearing would play a major role," Michael Oehler, professor of media and music management at the University of Cologne in Germany, said.

"But we did not know the exact range. Furthermore, the influence of pitch information was greater than we thought," he added.

--ANI

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Manipur blockade: Administration steps up efforts

Imphal, November 09 : The provision of security to trucks ferrying essential commodities to blockade-hit Manipur has brought a ray of hope among the locals.



Life back to normal in Haridwar

Haridwar, November 09 : Normalcy has been restored in Haridwar after a stampede claimed the lives of at least 16 devotees on Tuesday. Thousands of devotees converged on the banks of the River Ganga...



Model demands female directors for 'bikini scenes'

New Delhi, November 9 : Bollywood bombshell Shweta Bhardwaj, who was seen opposite actor Vivek Oberoi in the film 'Mission Istanbul', has suggested to rope in more female directors in the industry.



Maoists attack temporary paramilitary camp

Latehar, November 9 : Continuing their attacks against central counter-insurgency troops, Maoist ultras carried out another violent assault at a temporary paramilitary camp in the Latehar district of...



Kashmiris to Intensify Struggle against Pakistan's Illegal Occupation

Bedford, November 08: The protests against Kashmir's illegal occupation by Pakistan is growing.



Trinamool Congress delegation meets PM

New Delhi, November 08 : The crucial meeting of the Trinamool Congress with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh over the petrol price hike issue ended today with the party delegation demanding a greater...



Mayawati hikes minimum support price of cane

Lucknow, November 8: Seeking to garner public support ahead of the upcoming state polls, Uttar Pradesh chief Mayawati today announced a hike in the minimum support price of sugarcane for farmers.



Hardiwar stampede: Death toll reaches 16

Haridwar, November 8 : The death toll in Haridwar stampede has climbed up to 16. Sub-divisional magistrate of Hardiwar confirmed that 14 women have died in the incident that took place today morning.



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