

Protest over cruel bull run at San Fermín fiesta

13 people have been killed at the fiesta since 1924 but it remains popular

STEPHEN BURGEN

Hundreds of semi-naked protestors marched through the streets of Pamplona on Monday protesting against the annual running of the bulls during the San Fermín festivities starting today. About 300 activists from the group People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals, wearing just G-strings and their underwear, demanded a halt to the annual "cruel bull running" which attracts ten of thousands of tourists from all over the world. Last year a Spaniard died from his injuries during the bull run. The demonstrators had wanted to protest naked but city officials refused permission.

If your idea of a holiday is a week-

long, booze-fuelled, round-the-clock party, where you pause only to subject yourself each day to five minutes of sheer terror, then the annual running of the bulls at the festival is definitely for you. The fiesta has been held since 1591, but only became famous when it was described in Ernest Hemingway's depiction of the so-called lost generation in his novel *The Sun Also Rises*.

Since then it has attracted a growing number of people from abroad and now tens of thousands converge every year on the small town in Navarra to test their courage and their capacity for alcohol. Their numbers have also contributed to the danger: no one died during the first few cen-

turies of the encierro, as the run is known, but there have been 13 fatalities since 1924. At least one person is seriously injured each year, some from bulls, some through being trampled by fellow runners, and others from the tradition of jumping from the top of the Santa Cecilia fountain in the often forlorn hope that someone will catch them. The origins of the encierro are entirely practical. The bulls had to be herded from the corral in the Plaza Santo Domingo to the Plaza de Toros and they were driven through the streets with the aid of a few whacks from rolled up newspapers. In due course more and more people joined in and so the fiesta was born.



Thousands gather in the Plaza del Ayuntamiento for the chupinazo to start the fiesta

Bill to outlaw smacking of children fails in UK

REUTERS LONDON

A bid to outlaw the smacking of children has failed in the House of Lords. Instead, the Upper House opted on Monday for a government-backed compromise crafted by Liberal Democrat Lord Lester, in which peers voted to allow "mild smacking".

The move to ban parents from smacking their children was defeated, with 75 voting for the measure and 250 against it. Peers then went on to support the compromise solution with 226 votes versus 91 votes against. Prime Minister Tony Blair's spokesman said the government was opposed to a total ban.

"The government wants to send the signal that parents do have the right to discipline children," he said. "We don't want to criminalise parents — the government believes parents will recognise the distinction between discipline, which is right, and hurting a child, which is



Tony Blair is against a ban on smacking so as not to "criminalise" parents / EFE

wrong," he added.

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US ELECTION

Kerry picks Edwards

US Presidential candidate John Kerry has picked Senator John Edwards as his running mate for the November election. The two democrats will start a multi-state tour today but the Kerry-Edwards ticket will be formally approved at the Democratic National Convention in Boston at the end of July. "John has shown courage and conviction as a champion for middle class Americans and those struggling to reach the middle class," said John Kerry. John Edwards is seen as someone who has the common touch and reach out to voters.

MIDDLE EAST

Seven dead in violence

Four Palestinians and an Israeli army officer were killed during disturbances in Nablus in the West Bank. The deaths happened when Israeli soldiers were hunting Palestinian militants in the Ein Beit Ilma refugee camp. Reports say that a missile was fired at a building which killed a Palestinian-born US academic and his 16 year old son. In Gaza Israeli troops killed two Palestinian militants.

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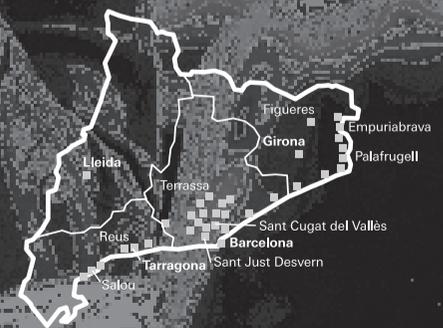
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