

# All roads lead to Rio for Carnival

The kaleidoscope of colour and music that is carnival season in Brazil has begun with hundreds of thousands of people attracted like moths to a flame to Rio as the nation lets its hair down

"I declare open Carnival in the marvellous city of Rio de Janeiro. Let Carnival 2014 be one of peace, full of harmony, and a lot of festivities, but responsibly," said Carnival King Momo, before breaking into some dance moves. The world will come to this city for the next four days, with some three million visitors expected in all. Hundreds of street bands, samba schools and decorated floats will be in competition for the carnival prizes, climaxing in the great parade in the city's legendary Sambadrome.

The colourful and noisy mayhem that is carnival season in Brazil

got underway this weekend, as dancing filled the Sambodrome. With the World Cup just over three months away, the tourist spotlight is already on Brazil. Five million people are expected to join the annual shindig and party to the rhythm of the samba. A fifth of them will be visitors.

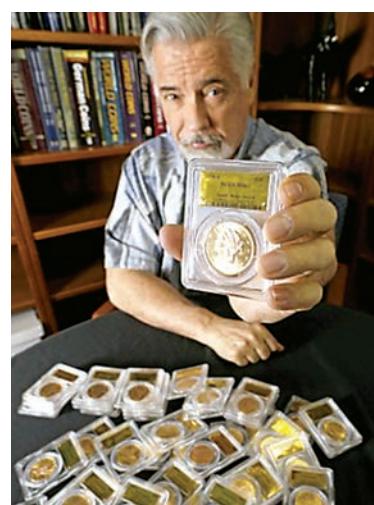
One partygoer described the atmosphere, "The feeling in the parade is like a football player who scores a goal in a stadium full of people, like in Maracanà Stadium."

The carnival is supposed to run for three weeks but it often runs into overtime as the party goes on and on.



Carnival parade in Rio de Janeiro's Sambadrome

REUTERS



David Hall

**California couple unearth \$10m Gold Rush-era coins**

**At first the Californian couple out for a walk on their rural property thought they had stumbled across an old can of paint**

Closer inspection revealed a stash of more than 1,400 gold coins from the 19th century, half-buried in the shadow of an old tree. Had they been stolen? Had something happened to the original owner? Nobody knows. What is certain is that the rare Gold Rush-era coins are worth \$10m (7.25m Euros).

The trove, unearthed in April last year, may be the greatest buried treasure ever found in the United States, a currency firm representing the pair said. The gold pieces, dating to the mid-late 1800s and still in nearly mint condition, were discovered buried in two decaying metal cans.

## French jobless total hit new record high in January

**The number of people out of work in France rose again in January in the face of a weak recovery in the Eurozone's second-biggest economy**

The jobless total was up by a further 8,900 last month. That is not good news for President Francois Hollande who has been promising to

cut unemployment. At just over 3.3 million, the total is up 0.3 percent up from the previous month and is 4.4 percent higher than January last year.

Hollande's popularity has plummeted to record lows as he failed to come good on a pledge to reduce unemployment by the end of last year. That was despite the French govern-

ment spending at least two billion Euros on subsidised jobs. Hollande acknowledges more needs to be done to get French companies hiring.

He recently offered to phase out 30 billion Euros in payroll charges that companies currently pay, in exchange for them committing to job creation targets.

## More massive losses at Royal Bank of Scotland

**Royal Bank of Scotland's shares plummeted after it announced losses last year of 8.2bn pounds (9.98bn Euros) due to restructuring costs and fines for misconduct**

New Chief Executive Ross McEwan warned there would be more losses as it repositions itself away from investment banking and more towards a lender for British individuals and businesses. McEwan, who is seeking to shake off RBS's reputation as Britain's pariah bank, said, "We are the least trusted company in the least trusted sector of the economy. That must change."

There was political anger that, despite the losses, RBS paid out 576 pounds (701bn Euros) in bonuses. RBS has become, as one UK parliamentarian recently put it, 'the unacceptable face of British banking'. While the government sits on a paper loss of around 16bn pounds (19.5bn Euros), it has continued to pay bumper bonuses.



Pedestrians walk past a branch of the Royal Bank of Scotland

Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg said in a television interview, "A loss-making bank that is basically on a life-support system because of the generosity of British taxpayers shouldn't be dishing out ever larger amounts of money in pay and bonuses."

McEwan, who has waived his

bonus for last year, defended the payouts, which had been agreed with UK Financial Investments, the agency that manages the government's stake. "We need to be pragmatic. I need to pay these people fairly in the market place to do the job," he said.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

**GT Venom with a sting in its tail scorches record**

**The Hennessey GT Venom has just become the fastest production car in the world hitting 435.31 kilometres per hour (270.49 miles per hour)**

Former racing driver Brian Smith powered the 7.0-litre twin-turbo GM-sourced V8 engined vehicle across the space shuttle landing strip at the Kennedy Space Centre to pip the old record set in 2010 by a Bugatti Veyron. But his feat will not get the official stamp from the Guinness Book of Records which demands the car makes two runs over the flying kilometre.

NASA could not authorise a second run at the Space Centre for the team on the day. Smith said he believed he could have gone even faster if the runway had been longer. To date 11 of the cars have been delivered worldwide at a cost of around 900,000 Euros each. Shipping and extras are not included in the price!

## Australian Airline Qantas to cut 5,000 jobs

**Australian Airline Qantas has announced a pre-tax loss the equivalent of 165m Euros for the second half of 2013 and is to cut 5,000 jobs**

It is also seeking to get rid of some 50 aircraft, either through sales or deferring orders for new planes. These include three Boeing 787 Dreamliners, and eight Airbus A380s.



Over the next three years, Qantas wants to strip the equivalent of 1.3bn Euros from its costs as it tries to persuade the Australian government to offer aid, and reassure shareholders. Qantas faces fierce competition from Virgin Australia in its home market.

## Comet Hunters

**The Rosetta Mission, Europe's quest to put a robotic lander on a comet, is gathering momentum**

Last month, the Rosetta probe woke up from hibernation after two-and-a-half-years in a deep sleep moving through space. With 254 days to go before it puts the Philae lander on a comet the spacecraft is still 800 million kilometres from Earth, yet remains close to the hearts of those who control it. We'll be following the Rosetta team throughout the year as they carry out their groundbreaking mission. Click above to check out our first visit to the team's control room.