

Business

Procter & Gamble declared victory in seeing off a challenge from **Nelson Peltz**, an activist investor, for a seat on the board. The consumer-goods group said a preliminary count showed that all its current directors had been re-elected by shareholders at its annual meeting. Mr Peltz said he would wait for the final tally to be certified before conceding defeat. It was the biggest and costliest proxy fight for a board seat in American corporate history. After Mr Peltz's firm took a \$3.5bn stake in P&G, the company spent tens of millions fighting his campaign for it to boost profits by streamlining its business.

In some good news for Mr Peltz, the chief investment officer at **Trian**, his management fund, won a seat on the board of **General Electric** and will argue for deeper cost-cutting at the conglomerate. This year has seen a sizeable increase in spending by activist investors overall, as they set their sights on bigger-than-usual corporate targets.

And don't slam the door

The Weinstein Company sacked **Harvey Weinstein** following claims that he had sexually harassed women in the film industry for decades. The claims bring an ignominious end to the career of one of Hollywood's most influential producers, who helped finance "Pulp Fiction" and other critically acclaimed movies. Mr Weinstein apologised for "the way I've behaved", but denied the more serious allegations. It is the latest sexual-misconduct scandal to rock corporate America, coming on the heels of similar assertions made at Fox News.

BAE Systems said it would shed nearly 2,000 jobs in Britain, or about 6% of its workforce in the country, in a restructuring that will refocus the global defence company around three manufacturing divisions: land, sea and air. The bulk of job losses will be at

the factory that assembles the Typhoon jet, for which orders have dwindled.

Kobe Steel's share price swooned after it revealed that the safety-inspection records on some aluminium, copper and steel products it had shipped to customers had been forged. Japan's third-biggest steelmaker provides materials to many companies in heavy industry, including carmakers and aircraft manufacturers.



Despite the plummeting value of Kobe Steel's equity, Japan's **Nikkei 225** stockmarket average hit a 21-year high, buoyed in part by soaring expectations that the weaker yen will produce bumper quarterly profits.

The American economy lost 33,000 jobs in September, the first contraction in payrolls for seven years. The hurricanes

that battered Texas and Florida were blamed, though there were some bright spots. An extra 11,000 insurance-claims adjusters were hired, and building-supply stores took on another 5,000 staff.

The IMF slightly raised its forecast for **world growth** to 3.6% this year and 3.7% in 2018. The fund estimates a strong rebound for advanced economies, driven by growth in Canada, the euro area and Japan. But it still has nagging worries about an uncertain policy outlook for America, and tricky Brexit talks for Britain.

They've ad it coming

Google said it was investigating "attempts to abuse our systems", after it was reported that it, too, had been targeted by Russian provocateurs during last year's presidential election. Media reports suggest the Russians placed ads or created channels designed to spur political controversy on Gmail, YouTube and other Google services.

Alibaba decided to establish a research academy with offices in cities around the world and advisers from leading universities. The Chinese e-commerce firm is ramping up its spending

on R&D to \$15bn over the next three years, which should help it keep up with the technological prowess of Amazon and Google. Its academy will work on data intelligence, the internet of things, fintech, quantum computing, human-machine interaction and many other things.

Qualcomm was given a \$774m fine in Taiwan for abusing its commanding position in the market for licensing chips for phones, the biggest such penalty to be handed down in the country. It is the latest antitrust ruling to hit the company following a similar decision in South Korea. America's Federal Trade Commission is also investigating its alleged anti-competitive behaviour.

Lost its fizz

The **sugar-tax** movement received a big setback when Cook County, which covers Chicago, voted to repeal a levy on sugary drinks, just two months after it came into effect. Small businesses complained that they were losing customers, with some even driving across the county line and state line to avoid paying the tax.

Other economic data and news can be found on pages 84-85

