

HD Barra hits top spot of female leaders

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THE number of female chief executives in the Fortune Global 500 has risen to a record 17, with women taking the top jobs at some of the world's most famous companies.

Leading the pack is Mary Barra, the first woman chief executive of General Motors.

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Ms Barra took over in January at a tough time for the **company**.

So far this year, GM has recalled at least 29 **million** vehicles, more than half of them because of potentially defective ignition switches blamed for at least 61 crashes.

Maria das Gracas Silva Foster took over at Brazilian **oil** giant Petrobras more than two years ago, while Meg Whitman took the helm at Hewlett-Packard and saw its stock price almost double in 2013.

The list of the world's biggest companies by revenues shows that the largest firms are back in top health in 2013, with all-time records for profits and revenue.

Fortune's 500 biggest global companies made combined revenues of \$US31.1 trillion last year, up 2.5% from 2012, and combined profits of nearly \$US2 trillion, a jump of 27%.

Fortune said Vodafone was the **company** on the list with the biggest profit for 2013 – more than \$US94 **billion** – but that was helped hugely by the **sale** of a massive **stake** in US joint venture Verizon Wireless.

The number of **Chinese** companies in the 500 rose by six to 95, but America still claimed the most firms with 128, down four from 2102.

Japan had 57 companies, down five.

The UK had at least 28 companies on the list, but Wal-Mart regained the top spot from Royal Dutch Shell.

America's 128 firms on the list reported \$US8.6 trillion in revenue, while **China**'s 95 companies had revenues of \$US5.8 trillion.

Banking was the most represented industry on the list with 55 firms, followed by petroleum refining with 40 and motor vehicles and parts with 33.

Aerospace giant Rolls-Royce made the list for the first time at 489, as its 2013 revenues passed \$US24 **billion**.

Shell was No.2 in the rankings, with more than \$US459 **billion** in 2013 revenues and profit of more than \$US16 **billion**.

Fortune said a 4.6% drop in sales helped to knock the **company** off the top spot it had held for two years, as well as a near-40% fall in 2013 profit due to low production, high costs and refining problems.

– The Independent

CO gnmoc : General Motors Company

IN i351 : Motor Vehicles | i35101 : Passenger Cars | iaut : Automotive

NS gcat : Political/General News

RE queensl : Queensland | apacz : Asia Pacific | ausnz : Australia/Oceania | austr : Australia

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