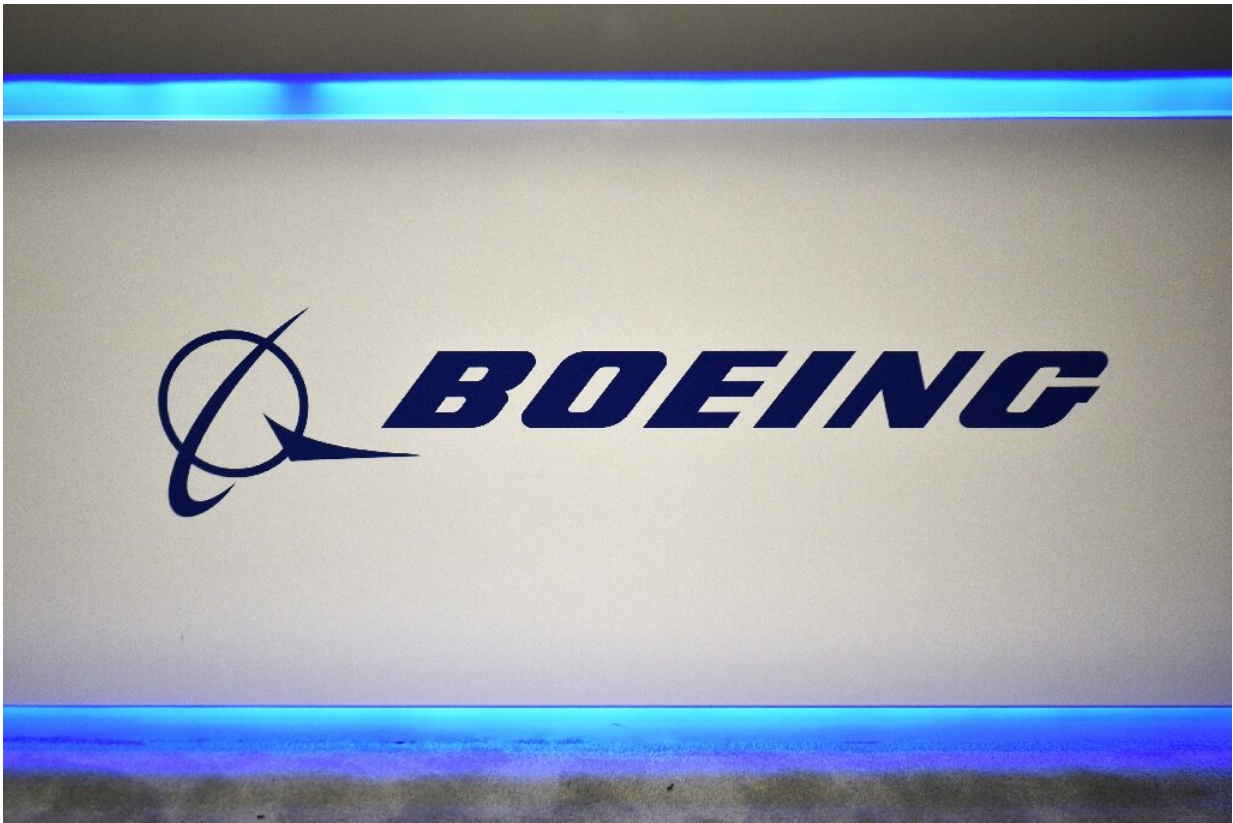


Boeing could suspend or cut 737 MAX output: report

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Boeing is reportedly considering either suspending or cutting back production of the 737 MAX, despite previously saying it expected to return the plane to service before the end of 2019

Boeing could on Monday announce whether to further cut or suspend

production of its grounded 737 MAX plane, The Wall Street Journal reported Sunday.

Citing people familiar with the matter, the Journal said the US firm's management increasingly sees a production pause as the most viable option.

Boeing had already decided to reduce its production pace from 52 to 42 planes per month after two crashes led authorities around the world to ground the entire 737 MAX fleet in mid-March.

Steve Dickson, head of the Federal Aviation Administration, met Thursday with Boeing chief Dennis Muilenburg to express concerns the company was rushing to get the jets back in the air, the agency said.

Boeing then acknowledged that the 737 MAX would not return to the skies until next year. The company had repeatedly said it expected approval for the planes to fly again before 2020.

Though the MAX has not flown for nine months following the [fatal crashes](#), Boeing has continued production, accumulating months' worth of airplanes.

"We continue to work closely with the FAA and global regulators towards certification and the [safe return](#) to service of the MAX," a Boeing spokesperson said when asked for comment by AFP.

"We will continue to assess production decisions based on the timing and conditions of return to service, which will be based on regulatory approvals and may vary by jurisdiction," the spokesperson added.

A halt in production would signal the plane's grounding could last longer than previously thought.

Global regulators ordered a halt to MAX flights following the deadly Lion Air crash of October 2018 in Indonesia and the Ethiopian Airlines disaster in March, which together killed 346 people.

Boeing and the FAA have been under intense scrutiny for their responses to issues with the aircraft, including the flight-handling system involved in both accidents, the Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System, or MCAS.

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