

Elon Musk offers Boeing help with batteries

WASHINGTON, USA: Technology entrepreneur Elon Musk, founder of the electric car Tesla and the aeronautics firm SpaceX, has offered to help Boeing fix its problems with the batteries in its grounded 787 Dreamliner aircraft.

Musk confirmed that he has reached out to Boeing, which has been struggling to address the concerns of customers and regulators following recent fire incidents that grounded the fleet.

"Elon has offered to help Boeing. Any further information about the offer will be left to Boeing and the FAA to communicate," SpaceX spokesman Emily Shanklin said, confirming messages posted by Musk on Twitter.

Boeing spokesman Marc Birtel confirmed the aircraft giant was "engaged with a number of experts, both inside and outside the company, in resolving the issue and returning the 787 fleet to flight status. However we are not identifying any of them by name," he added.

World regulators grounded all 50 operating Dreamliners after a fire aboard a parked Japan Airlines 787 on 7 January and a smoking battery that forced the emergency landing of an All Nippon Airways 787 on 16 January.

US government investigators said earlier this month that they could not yet explain what caused the potentially catastrophic battery meltdown.

Boeing has since halted deliveries of the 787, introduced in October 2011 as an ambitious, energy-efficient aircraft designed with extensive use of lightweight composite materials and pioneering electrical systems.

SpaceX made headlines last October when it successfully launched an unmanned capsule to the International Space Station, marking a major landmark in American efforts to privatise space exploration.

Tesla sells a sports car at more than US\$100,000 and launched the Model S - which does not have an internal combustion engine and features a second trunk under the hood - at a starting price of US\$49,900.

The Model S accelerates from 0 to 100 kph in 4.4 seconds and includes an in-dash touchscreen with Internet capabilities, allowing for streaming radio, Web browsing and navigation.

Source: *AFP* via I-Net Bridge.