

Turkey says to produce S-500s with Russia after S-400 deal



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan flashes four fingers and makes the Rabia sign as he speaks during holy month of Ramadan, at Istiklal Avenue in Istanbul.

Ankara, Turkey

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Saturday said Turkey and Russia would jointly produce S-500 defence systems after Ankara's controversial purchase of the S-400 missile defence system from Moscow.

Turkey's push to buy the S-400s has further strained already tense relations with the United States which has repeatedly warned Ankara of the risks including sanctions as a result of the purchase.

"There is absolutely no question of (Turkey) taking a step back from the S-400s purchase. That is a done deal," Erdogan said in Istanbul.

"There will be joint production of the S-500 after the S-400," Erdogan told an audience of young people asking questions.

Ties between NATO allies Turkey and the US have frayed over multiple issues including American support for a Syrian Kurdish militia viewed as terrorists by Ankara and the US failure to extradite a Muslim preacher blamed for the 2016 coup attempt against Erdogan.

Washington says the deal with Moscow is a threat to Western defence and in April suspended deliveries of the F-35 stealth fighter jet to Turkey in a bid to halt the purchase.

Boeing acknowledges flaw

New York, United States

Boeing acknowledged Saturday it had to correct flaws in its 737 MAX flight simulator software used to train pilots, after two deadly crashes involving the aircraft that killed 346 people.

"Boeing has made corrections to the 737 MAX simulator software and has provided additional information to device operators to ensure that the simulator experience is representative across different flight conditions," it said in a statement.

The company did not indicate

when it first became aware of the problem, and whether it informed regulators.

Its statement marked the first time Boeing acknowledged there was a design flaw in software linked to the 737 MAX, whose MCAS anti-stall software has been blamed in large part for the Ethiopian Airlines tragedy.

According to Boeing, the flight simulator software was incapable of reproducing certain flight conditions similar to those at the time of the Ethiopian Airlines crash in March or the Lion Air crash in October.

The company said the lat-

est "changes will improve the simulation of force loads on the manual trim wheel," a rarely used manual wheel to control the plane's angle.

"Boeing is working closely with the device manufacturers and regulators on these changes and improvements, and to ensure that customer training is not disrupted," it added.

Southwest Airlines, a major 737 MAX customer with 34 of the aircraft in its fleet, told AFP it expected to receive the first simulator "late this year."

American Airlines, which has 24 of the aircraft, said it had ordered a 737 MAX simulator

that will be delivered and put into operation in December.

"As a result of the continuing investigation into both aircraft accidents, we are looking at the potential for additional training opportunities in coordination with the FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) and Allied Pilots Association," it added.

The planes have been grounded around the world, awaiting approval from US and international regulators before they can return to service.

Only Air Canada has a MAX simulator, industry sources said.



A Boeing 787-8 from LAN Air Lines is seen on the tarmac of LAX Los Angeles airport

'Now our watch is ended': 'Game of Thrones' wraps



British actress Emilia Clarke



Arya Stark (Maisie Williams) in Game of Thrones



British actor Kit Harington



US actor Peter Dinklage



British actor Isaac Hempstead Wright

Los Angeles, United States

After eight epic years of chivalry, sex, death and dragons, "Game of Thrones" fans worldwide have just 79 pulsating minutes remaining Sunday to get their final fix in one of the most hotly anticipated events in TV history.

The blood-spattered tale of noble families vying for the Iron Throne has just one episode to go and buzz is at fever pitch for a ratings juggernaut that has demolished audience records like a Dothraki barbarian finishing off a skillet of horse meat.

"We want people to love it. It matters a lot to us. We've spent 11 years doing this," Dan Weiss, who directed the 73rd and final episode with fellow showrunner David Benioff, told Entertain-

ment Weekly.

While many will watch at home, perhaps with a goblet of Dornish red wine and a punnet of Braavosi cockles, thousands will celebrate and mourn the show's denouement at viewing parties in bars, banqueting halls and backyards from Alaska to Armenia. One of the darkest and most controversial prime-time series ever made, "GoT" has been the target of criticism over the years for senseless violence and its repeated use of rape as a dramatic device.

Hacked, burned, flayed

The scriptwriters have brutalized women, killed children, depicted graphic sex and had their characters hacked, stabbed, flayed, poisoned, decapitated, burned alive, eye-gouged and eviscerated -- all in glorious

close-up.

Even principal character Jon Snow (Kit Harington), whose fellow Night's Watch troops would chant "And now his watch is ended" at comrades' funerals, suffered the indignity of being briefly dead after a particularly violent quarrel.

The adult themes have not deterred fans, however, nor the industry itself, which has seen fit to make it the most decorated series in history, with 47 Emmy Awards.

Airing in 170 countries under its portentous tagline, "Winter is Coming," the show is also the most expensive ever, with a budget of \$15 million per episode in its final run.

The season seven finale set an all-time US record for premium cable TV with 16.5 million people watching live or streaming on

the day of transmission and 15 million more tuning in later.

Viewing records also tumbled across the world, with Britain's Sky Atlantic and OCS in France showing episodes in the middle of the night in sync with their US premieres. Season six was the first to move beyond the source material, George R.R. Martin's "A Song of Ice and Fire" novels, and carve its own path.

Critics said it marked a return to form, with the narrative allowing female characters to demonstrate complexity and moral agency lacking in some of the earlier seasons.

The shortened final two seasons have been more of a mixed bag, with many fans furious over what they consider poor writing.

Mass-murdering madness

Most controversial has

been the rapid descent into mass-murdering madness by Emilia Clarke's fan favorite Daenerys Targaryen, arguably the lead character in an enormous ensemble that has called on the services of such luminaries as Charles Dance, Sean Bean, Jim Broadbent and Diana Rigg.

A Change.org petition called "Remake Game of Thrones Season 8 with competent writers" had passed one million signatures with more than 24 hours to go until Sunday's finale.

Assuming there is no do-over, the biggest mystery of all remains who will be sitting on the Iron Throne and ruling Westeros when "Game of Thrones" comes to an end.

To throw hackers and pirates off the scent, Benioff and Weiss shot several versions of the final episode, a tactic already used for

"The Sopranos" and "Breaking Bad."

Sophie Turner, who plays Sansa Stark, has admitted that even she was fooled into believing a fake version of the ending.

Martin will himself discover the on-screen ending of his long-running masterwork before he has had a chance to conclude the fantasy on paper.

The plot lines for his long-awaited final two novels in the series -- "The Winds of Winter" and "A Dream of Spring" -- were adapted to the screen based on outlines Martin gave the show's writers. But there is no guarantee they will stick to his plan.

"Obviously, I wished I finished these books sooner so the show hadn't gotten ahead of me. I never anticipated that," Martin once told an interviewer.