

# Italian firms keen on missile defence system deal with Pakistan

## *Pakistan Defence*

**KARACHI:** Italian manufacturers and suppliers of military hardware, particularly missile defence systems, are eyeing Pakistan as a potential market to export their products and technology.

Representatives of leading defense equipment manufacturers, including MBDA, Italian developer and manufacturer of missiles; Elettronica, Integrated Electronic Attack and Self-Protection Systems developer; and Fincantieri, an Italian shipbuilding company on Thursday held a press conference onboard the visiting Italian Navy ship ITS Carabiniere. They briefed the press about their companies' expertise and willingness to explore Pakistan's market for defence products.

Earlier, Francesco Pagnotta, the commanding officer of the visiting Italian ship, briefed the media about the ship and her visit to South-East Asia and Australia.

ITS Carabiniere is an anti-submarine warship that was delivered to the Italian Navy in April 2015. ITS Carabiniere is fitted with latest generation platform and combat systems based on state of the art military and civil standards.

ITS Carabiniere's deployment is aimed at strengthening the ongoing cooperation with some trans-regional allies and developing relations with potential partners. The main theme of the naval campaign is maritime safety and surveillance, cooperation strengthening and naval diplomacy, Pagnotta said.

He said that the visit to South East Asia and Australia had started from Italy on December 20 last year. He said it reflected an international vision that converged and outlined this century as the "Blue Age". "The Blue Growth is considered a key factor for sustainable development of the countries where the sea is a key resource for business growth, employment and technology," he said.

The visit of Italian navy ship to Pakistan will strengthen bilateral relations and open new avenues in the area of defence collaboration and cooperation between the two navies.

The ship has reached Karachi after visiting Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Australia and Singapore where the frigate joined exercitations with local navies and took part in LIMA 17, held in Malaysia. The deployment of the ship was organised with the support of Fincantieri, Leonardo, MBDA Italia, Elettronica and Telespazio.

Italian defence attaché and officials of Pakistan Navy were also present in the press conference.