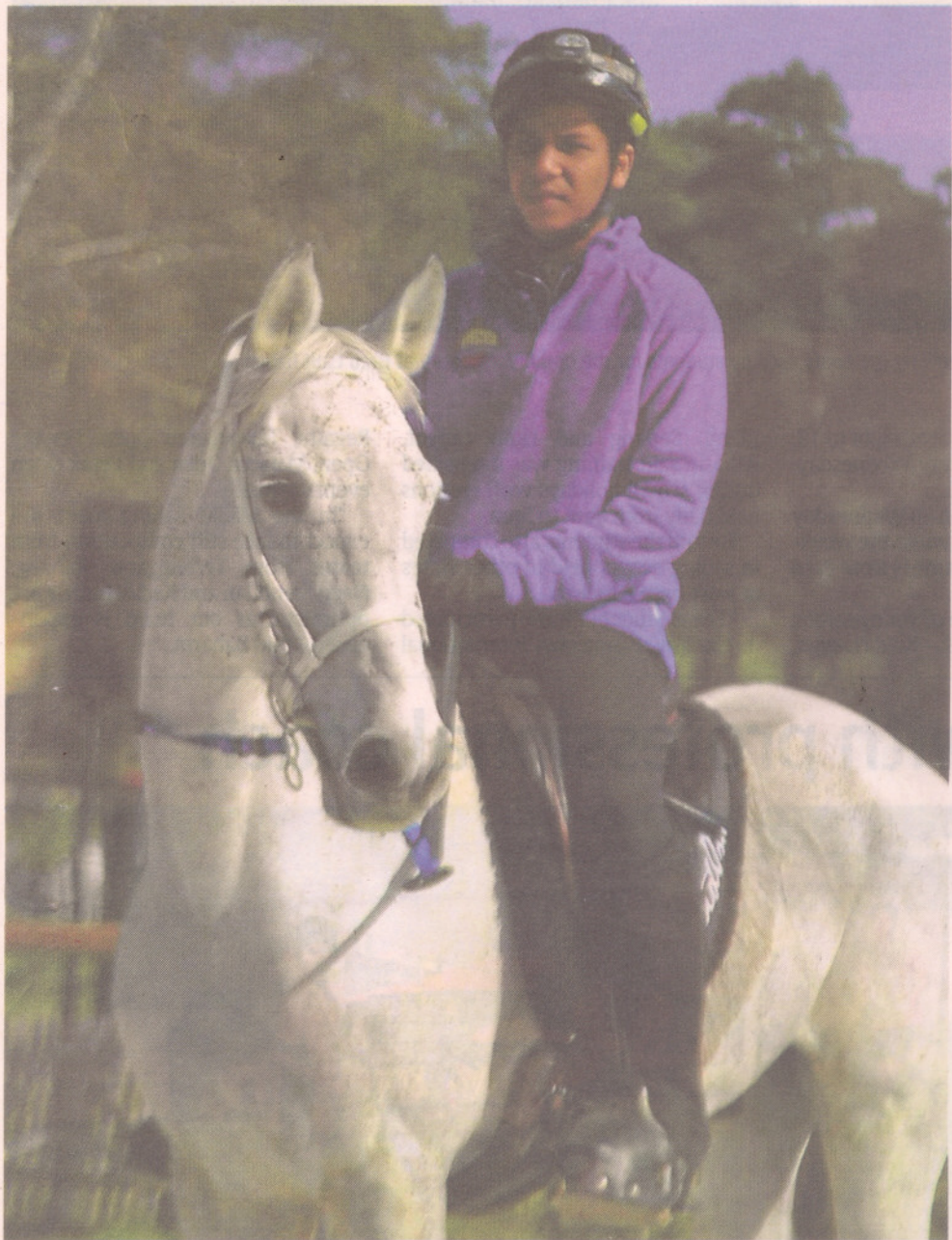


Lofty target for young rider

Ziyad aiming for top-10 finish in junior
division of World Endurance C'ships



Dateline: Penang

By **DASHEER NOH**

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MOHd Ziyad Mohd Hamzah is aiming to leave an indelible mark in the junior division of the World Endurance Championships in Tarbes, France, come July.

The world 85th-ranked junior rider from Langkawi, Kedah, has set his sights on a top-10 finish in the Junior category (14 to 21 years) of the championships which will take place from July 27 to 31.

Out of four mares at his disposal, he has chosen Melia du Barthes, a horse from the French stable, for the 120km race in the Junior championships.

The 12-year-old mare has a proven track record and Mohd Ziyad, who has ridden her before, is familiar with her traits and is confident that this will serve him well.

The other three choices are Oziris de Galonne, Braza and SW Pampero, which is one of the top 29 breeds in the world.

Both Braza and Pampero are Malaysian-bred mares while the other is based in France.

Apart from participating in the individual Junior event, Mohd Ziyad will join four other riders from Malaysia in the 160km team event in the Open category at the championships.

Ziyad will leave for France on Feb 26 and join the other Malaysian members in France.

Prior to the World meet, Mohd Ziyad will participate in two pre-championship races in Ratieras and Compiiegno, both in France, on March 16 and 17, and May 24 to 26 respectively, before proceeding to the World meet in Tarbes.

Last year, he became the youngest Asian rider ever to finish 36th at the World Endurance Junior Championships in Euston Park, England.

He has completed his secondary education and is awaiting entry into one of the local universities.

"I aim to finish better in this year's meet in France and if I can finish among the top 10, it will be a satisfactory performance for me," he said.

He has been involved in horse-riding activities since he was six years old under the tutelage of his father Mohd Hamzah H. Hanssens at the Seven Wells Stud Farm in Langkawi.

Che Mat Dan will be the chef de' equipe and Prof Datuk Bashir of Universiti Putra Malaysia will be the veterinary surgeon for the Malaysian team.

The other Malaysian riders who will participate in the senior races are Tunku Mohamad Ismail and Azizzatul Asma (both from Terengganu), Tengku Putri Helen Marina (Perlis) and Mohamad T. Aseef (Penang).



In training:
Mohd Ziyad
riding Melia du
Barthes. **Left:**
He poses for a
photo with
Oziris de
Galonne.