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## 'Country's 5G rollout ahead of schedule'

### NETWORK DEPLOYMENT

# 'COUNTRY'S 5G ROLLOUT AHEAD OF SCHEDULE'

DNB confident of achieving 80pc coverage in 2024, if not earlier

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**T**HE rollout of the 5G (fifth-generation) network nationwide is ahead of schedule and will exceed 40 per cent coverage of populated areas this month, said Digital Nasional Bhd (DNB).

It said the rollout was on track to achieving 80 per cent coverage of populated areas by 2024 or earlier.

"The network will cover 14 million people located in areas where it has been established, and in excess of 30 million in the next two years," it said.

According to DNB, the 40 per cent coverage of populated areas would be achieved with about 3,500 sites against the initially planned 4,018 sites.

This reduced site count is a result of supply chain issues earlier this year, and delays in securing local council approvals primarily in Selangor and Sarawak.

"These issues have largely been resolved and the network will be deployed

progressively next year as planned.

"In order to overcome the delays experienced and to achieve the 40 per cent coverage of populated areas, DNB had redirected its network deployment efforts to those states initially intended for next year and beyond," it said.

The network currently includes almost all of the federal territories, Selangor and significant parts of Penang, Johor and Negri Sembilan, as well as some parts of Melaka, Perak, Kelantan, Sabah and Sarawak.

Ericsson Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh head David Hagerbro said the rollout by DNB was one of the fastest in the world, having commenced deployment only in October last year.

DNB chief operating officer Nasution Mohamed said the company was confident of achieving 80 per cent coverage of populated areas within the next 18 months.

To date, five mobile network operators — Celcom Axiata Bhd, Digi Telecommunications Sdn Bhd, Telekom Malaysia Bhd, U Mobile Sdn Bhd and YTL Communications Sdn Bhd — are making retail 5G services available to end users.

DNB said Maxis Bhd customers would not be able to access 5G services yet pending shareholders' approval of the 5G Access Agreement, which Maxis had indicated it planned to seek next month.