

b Listen again and complete the information in the chart.

Zurich–Milan Tunnel	
Form of transportation	
Record	<i>world's longest railroad tunnel</i>
Distance	
Open to the public	
New travel time	
Problems	
Hong Kong–Macao–Zhuhai Bridge & Tunnel Project	
Form of transportation	
Record	
Completion date	
New travel time	
Problems	

3 Read Transcript 5.4 on page 43 and find words or phrases that mean...

- 1 solutions can be found to these problems
- 2 come to an important moment in its development
- 3 has caused a lot of discussion
- 4 have given their permission

With today's technology, it doesn't matter that a mountain range or a sea divides two countries. There are ways around these obstacles. One of the most important projects in the world along this line has just reached a milestone.

Yes, Switzerland's Gotthard Base Tunnel is about to become the world's longest railroad tunnel. The engineering team has just completed the drilling work in the Swiss Alps. The tunnel covers a distance of fifty-seven kilometers. It actually consists of two single-track tunnels, which, together with the shafts and passages that link the two tunnels, cover a total of 115 kilometers.

But you'll have to wait some time before you can actually travel through it. The Swiss Federal Railway intends to open the tunnel to the general public in 2017. The tunnel is expected to shorten travel time between Switzerland and Milan dramatically for locals, business travelers and tourists. The trip from Zurich to Milan will be cut by two hours, thus reducing travel time to ninety minutes. This is bound to increase traffic and trade between the two cities.

However, the project has been controversial; eight people have been killed in the construction work, and green campaigners complained of environmental damage to these beautiful mountains.

On the other side of the world, a different kind of milestone is being celebrated: the beginning of a new project. The Chinese authorities have just given the go-ahead for what is certain to be the longest highway bridge in the world, joining the city of Macao to Hong Kong. In fact, there will be a series of highway bridges and tunnels that will connect Hong Kong on the east side of the Pearl River Delta with Macao and the mainland Chinese city of Zhuhai on the west. At present it takes four and a half hours to make the trip by car, but the project hopes to cut the driving time to forty minutes. Local politicians and economists claim that it is bound to have a positive effect on the economy of the developing regions west of the delta.

"The new transportation network aims to improve finance, logistics and professional services in the Pearl River Delta," said a statement posted on the Hong Kong government website.

The bridge will eventually be a six-lane expressway and is expected to cost at least 107 billion dollars. It will include the building of two artificial islands. It is due to be completed in 2016. The project also plans to boost the construction industry, and when completed, the link will be a vital route for both trade and tourism. Environmental groups complain, though, of damage to the natural habitat of the Chinese white dolphin, among other species.